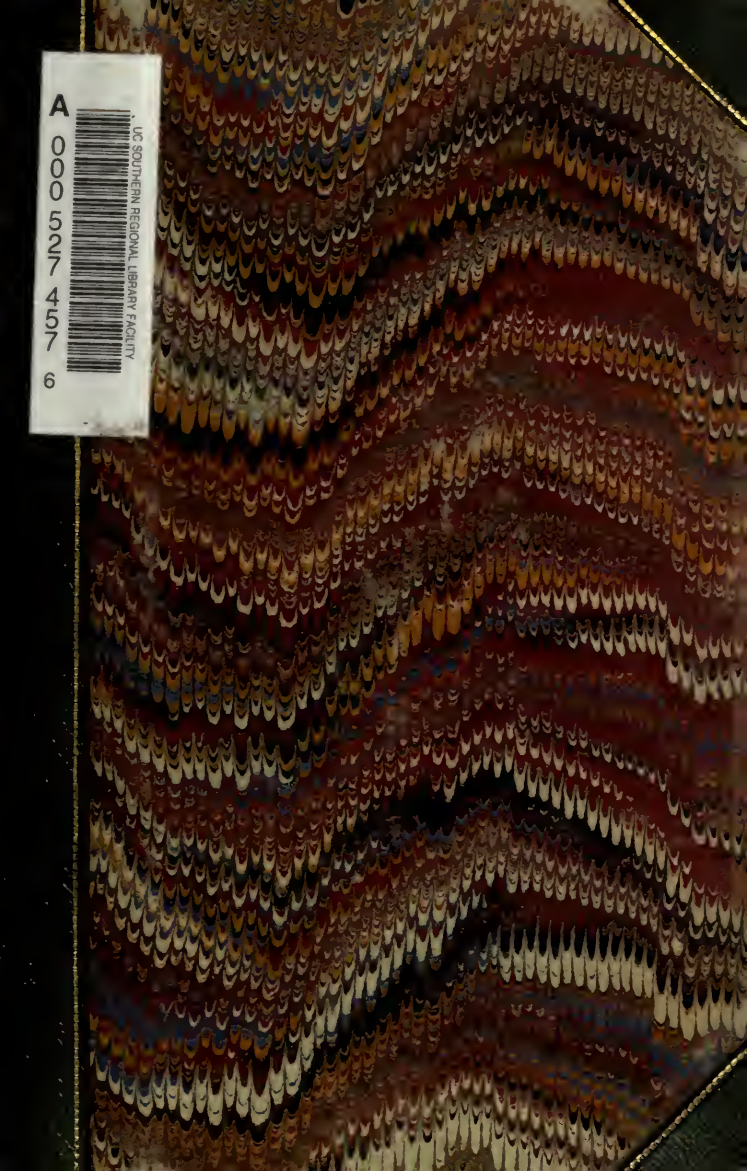
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UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY,

FROM THE

Creation of the World

TO THE

BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

THE LATE HON. ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER,

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CONTENTS.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of Christianity in the Empire.—Page 1.

CHAPTER V.

Last Period of the Roman History—Arcadius and Honorius —Theodosius II.—His Code of Laws—Attila—Progress of the Goths—Gothic Kingdom of Italy.—Page 22.

CHAPTER VI.

Genius and Character of the Gothic Nations.—Page 48.

CHAPTER VII.

Character of the Gothic Nations after the Conquest of Italy. —Page 66.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

Arabia—Ancient Manners and Religion—Rise of Mahomet—His Doctrines — Conquests — Death — Causes which contributed to the rapid Progress of his Religion —Conquests of the Successors of Mahomet—Change in the National Character after the Removal of the Seat of Empire to Bagdat—Learning of the Arabians —Page 89.

CHAPTER II.

Uncertainty of the early History of the Franks—Merovingian Period—Mayors of the Palace—Change in the Dynasty effected by Pepin—Manners and Customs—Form of Government and Laws of the Franks—Feudal System.—Page 102.

CHAPTER III.

Charlemagne—The new Empire of the West—Manners, Government, and Customs of the Age—Retrospective View of the Affairs of the Church—Arian and Pelagian Heresies—Origin of Monastic Orders—Pillar-Saints—Auricular Confession.—Page 128.

CHAPTER IV.

Successors of Charlemagne—Their Weakness and Dissensions—Rise of the Feudal Aristocracy—First Incursions of the Normans—Their Settlement in Normandy—State of the Eastern Empire—of Italy and the Church—Rise of the Secular power of the Popedom—Schism of the Greek and Latin Churches—the Saracens conquer Spain—Extinction of the Empire of Charlemagne—Empire of Germany—Otho the Great.—Page 159.

CHAPTER V.

History of Britain—Earliest State—Landing of Julius Cæsar — Conquest by the Romans — Abandonment of Britain on the Gothic Invasion of Italy—Irruptions of the Picts and Caledonians—Saxon Invasion—Heptarchy—Union under Egbert—Danish Invasions—Alfred the Great — His Institutions — His Successors — Norman Conquest.—Page 189.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Government, Laws, and Manners of the Anglo-Saxons.—Page 216.

CHAPTER VII.

State of Europe during the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Centuries.—Page 225.

CHAPTER VIII.

History of England during the Eleventh, Twelfth, and part of the Thirteenth Centuries:—Reign and Character of William the Conqueror—Doomsday-book—William Rufus—Henry I.—Stephen—Henry II. (Plantagenet)—Richard Cœur de Lion—King John—Magna Charta.—Page 242.

CHAPTER IX.

State of Europe in the Thirteenth Century—The Crusades.—Page 280.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of Christianity in the Empire.

A THOROUGH acquaintance with the history of the world and the state of mankind at the time of our Saviour's birth has led the wisest and most enlightened inquirers to conclude, that the Almighty having designed to illuminate the world by a revelation, there was no period at which it was most certainly required than that in which it was actually sent; nor could any concurrence of circumstances have been more favourable for its extensive dissemination than that which took place at the time of our Saviour's mission. A great part of the known world was at this time under the dominion of the Romans, and subject to all those grievances which are the inevitable result of a system of arbitrary power. Yet this circumstance of the union of so many nations into one great empire was of considerable advantage for the propagation and advancement of Christianity: for that spirit of civilizatiou which nations, hitherto sunk in barbarism, derived from an intercourse with a refined and liberal people, was

favourable to the diffusion of a religion which was founded in an extension of the social feelings; that is to say, in universal charity and benevolence. These nations were, previous to this, sunk in the grossest superstition. The pagan religion had no influence towards refining or improving the morals of mankind. The only attributes which distinguished the heathen gods from the race of ordinary men were their power and their immortality. They were endowed with the same passions as human creatures; and those distinguishing attributes of power and immortality served, in general, only to extend the measure and the enormity of their vices. The example of their gods was, therefore, an incentive to *vice* instead of *virtue;* and those rites with which many of them were worshipped, and which were conceived to be peculiarly acceptable to them, were often the grossest violations not only of *decency* but of *humanity*.

The *philosophy*, too, of the pagan world was but ill calculated to supply the place of religion in the refinement of morals. The doctrines of Epicurus, which were highly prevalent at the time of the birth of Christ, by representing pleasure as the chief good, by imposing no restraint on the indulgence of the passions, and limiting all happiness to the enjoyments of the present life, tended to corrupt and degrade human nature to a rank little superior to that of the brutes. Next to the Epicurean system, the doctrines most prevalent at that time were those of the new Academy; very different from those of the old Academy, founded by Plato. The new

Academics asserted the impossibility of arriving at truth, and held it entirely a matter of doubt whether vice or virtue were preferable. These opinions evidently struck at the foundation not only of religion, but of morality: and as to the other sects, although the *Platonists*, the *Stoics*, and the disciples of *Aristotle*, made the belief of a God a part of their philosophy, and some of them—as, for example, the *Stoics*—entertained sublime ideas with regard to the nature of virtue and the dignity of man, yet the austerity of their doctrines, and indeed the incomprehensibility of many of their tenets, gave them but few followers in comparison with the popular sects of the *Epicureans* and new *Academics*.*

At no period, therefore, of the history of the world did mankind stand more in need of a superior light to dispel the mists of error, and to point out the path of true religion and of virtue, than at that great era when the *Messiah* appeared upon earth. The propagation of a new religion, which thus strongly opposed itself not

* But not only was this the situation of the pagan world; even the Jews themselves, at this period, were a most corrupted and degenerate people. That law which they had received from God they had vitiated by the intermixture of heathen doctrines, and ceremonies borrowed from the pagans; while their doctors dissented from the opinions of each other in the most essential articles; such as the literal or figurative interpretation of the Scripture, the temporal or the spiritual authority of the promised Messiah, the materiality or spirituality of the soul; in short, Judaism itself was so much corrupted or disguised, that it had become a source of national discord and division among its own votaries, as well as the object of abhorrence and contempt to the pagan world.

only to the prevailing passions and habits of mankind, but to established and revered systems of philosophy, could not fail to encounter a violent and obstinate opposition. Let us take a short progressive view of the state of the church in the four first centuries from its institution.

The severe persecutions which the first Christians underwent from the Romans, who had then acquired the sovereignty of the greatest part of the known world, have been reckoned a singular exception to that spirit of toleration which this enlightened people showed for the various systems of idolatrous worship different from their own, which they found prevailing in the countries which they conquered; but this may be very easily accounted for: the Romans showed a spirit of toleration to the religious opinions of other nations, because they found nothing in these which aimed at the subversion of their own religion, nor any thing of that zeal of making converts which so remarkably distinguished the votaries of Christianity. The religion of the Romans was inseparably interwoven with their system of government. The Christians, by exposing the absurdities of their system of worship, in effect undermined the fabric of their political constitution: and hence they were not without reason considered by the Romans as a dangerous body of men, whom it became the interest of the empire to suppress and exterminate. Hence those opprobrious epithets with which they have been stigmatized by the Roman writers, and hence those cruel persecutions which they underwent from the emperors and their deputies in the provinces.

In the first century after the death of Christ, the emperors Nero and Domitian exercised against the Christians all that sanguinary cruelty which pre-eminently distinguished their characters; and the number of martyrs whose names are recorded to have suffered in those persecutions, though suspected to be exaggerated much beyond the truth, was yet extremely great. These were, no doubt, chiefly men of some eminence, whose consideration and authority with the lower ranks of the people made them be regarded as peculiarly dangerous, or whose wealth offered a tempting object to the avarice of the Roman governors.

But, under all these discouragements, Christianity made a most rapid and wonderful progress, through the power and efficacy of its first teachers, those holy men to whom the *Messiah* himself had given in charge the enunciation of his religion to mankind.

There is no subject which has afforded greater controversy than the ascertainment of that external form which our Saviour is supposed to have given to the primitive church, or that method which was instituted for its government. While the supporters of the Roman Catholic faith maintain, that it was our Saviour's intention that the whole Christian church should form one body, which was to be governed by St. Peter and his successors—the doctors of the Church of England deny the evidence of any divine institution of a supreme perpetual head; but refer to the *Apostles* the nomination of *Bishops* or *Ministers*, presiding over a certain district, whom the civil authority, and regulations of good policy, afterwards sub-

jected to a *Metropolitan*, a *Patriarch*, or an *Archbishop*. The Presbyterians again affirm, that it was the intention of the great Author of Christianity that all ministers and teachers of the Gospel should be upon a level of perfect equality. To these three opinions a fourth may be added, which, perhaps, comes nearer the truth than any of them; and this is, that neither Christ nor his Apostles have laid down *any certain* or *precise system* of *church government;* but, confining their precepts to the pure doctrines of religion, have, with admirable wisdom, left all Christian associations to regulate the government of their churches in that manner which is best adapted to the spirit of their political constitutions, and to the varying state of mankind in different ages or periods of society.

It is certain that, during the first century from the death of Christ, the several churches which had been instituted by the Apostles, or their successors, were entirely independent of each other; and the bishops, or presbyters, who governed them, acknowledged no sort of subjection to any common head; nor, till the *second* century, was there such a thing known as a general council of the church.

About the middle of the second century, we find that the books of the New Testament had been collected into one volume, and were received as a canon of faith in all the Christian churches. This selection of the inspired books from the compositions of many ministers, or teachers of Christianity, who had written in imitation of their style, and had recorded the acts of our Saviour and his Apostles, is supposed to have been made by some

of the early Fathers of the church. The four Gospels, it is generally believed, had been collected during the lifetime of St. John. The books of the Old Testament had been translated from the Hebrew into Greek by the orders of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the year 285 before Christ.*

* The most ancient account we have of this Septuagint translation of the Bible is from Aristeas, an officer in the guards of Ptolemy Philadelphus at the time when it was completed. He informs us that Ptolemy, being desirous of forming a very great library at Alexandria, employed Demetrius Phalereus, a noble Athenian, to procure from different nations all books of any reputation that were among them. Demetrius informed him that the Jews were possessed of a most extraordinary volume, containing the ancient history of that people, and the ordinances of their lawgiver Moses, which he represented as a singular curiosity. Ptolemy immediately sent to Jerusalem to procure this volume, and, being desirous of understanding its contents, he requested of Eleazer the High Priest to send him six elders of each of the tribes, men of fidelity and ability, to translate it into the Greek language ; in consideration of which favour, he agreed to set at liberty all the Jewish captives, to the amount of a hundred and twenty thousand, whom his father Ptolemy Soter had reduced to slavery. The request was granted; a magnificent copy of the Old Testament, written in letters of gold, and *seventy-two* learned men, were sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria, where they were received with the utmost respect, and lodged in a palace prepared for their reception.

In modern times, Dupin, Prideaux, and others, have endeavoured to discredit many of the circumstances enumerated by Aristeas ; but all agree in the main fact, that a translation of the books of the Old Testament was made into Greek under Ptolemy Philadelphus, and lodged in the Alexandrine library.

For four hundred years this translation was in high estimation with the Jews ; it was read in their synagogues in preference to the Hebrew, and that even in Jerusalem and

As the Christian religion was received, at first, by many, from the conviction of its truth from external evidence, and without a due examination of its doctrines, it was not surprising that many who called themselves Christians should retain the doctrines of a prevailing philosophy to which they had been accustomed, and endeavour to accommodate these to the system of revelation which they found in the sacred volumes. Such, for example, were the Christian Gnostics, who intermixed the doctrines of the oriental philosophy concerning the two separate principles, a good and an evil, with the precepts of Christianity, and admitted the authority of Zoroaster, as an inspired personage, equally with that of Jesus Christ. Such, likewise, were the sect of the Ammonians, who vainly endeavoured to reconcile together the opinions of all the different schools of the pagan philosophy, and attempted, with yet greater absurdity, to accommodate all these to the doctrines of Christianity. From this confusion of the pagan philo-

Judea. But when they saw that it was equally valued by the Christians, they became jealous of it, and employed Aquila, a heathen proselyte to the Jewish religion, to make a new translation, which he completed about A. D. 128. In this work Aquila took care to give such a turn to all the ancient prophecies relating to the Messiah, that they should not apply to Jesus Christ; and other translations on the same insidious principle were made by Symmachus and Theodotion.

Those who desire more particular accounts of the Septuagint translation may consult "Prideaux' Connexions," part 2, b. i.; "Hody de Bibliorum Textibus;" "Owen's Inquiry into the Septuagint Versions;" "Blair's Lectures on the Canon;" and "Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament."

sophy with the plain and simple doctrines of the Christian religion, the church, in this period of its infant state, suffered in a most essential manner. The Christian doctors began now to introduce that subtle and obscure erudition which tends to perplex and bewilder, instead of enlightening the understanding. The effect of this in involving religion in all the perplexity of the scholastic philosophy, and thus removing its doctrines beyond the comprehension of the mass of mankind, was, with great justice, condemned by many of the wisest fathers of the church; and hence sprung those inveterate and endless controversies between faith and reason, religion and philosophy, which began at that early period, and have, unfortunately, continued to the present day.

We have remarked, that hitherto the Christian churches were entirely independent of each other. About the middle of the second century, the Greek churches began to unite into general associations; the whole churches of a province forming one body, and agreeing to be governed by general rules of discipline, which were concerted and framed by a council of the elders, or deputies from each particular church. These assemblies the Greeks termed Synods; and the Latin churches, following the same example, termed these general meetings Concilia; and the rules of discipline there enacted were called Canons. As it was necessary for the maintenance of order in these assemblies, that some person of authority should preside, the right of presiding was conferred, by an election of the several bishops, either upon some one of themselves possessing eminent virtue or abilities, or,

not improbably, on the person who had the most extensive church or diocese; and hence arose the right of the Metropolitans. A short time after, we find a superior order in the church, who regulated ecclesiastical matters over a whole kingdom, or rather a district, of the Christian world: these were styled Patriarchs; and by-and-by, in the ordinary course of policy, a subordination took place even among these, and the Bishop of Rome was generally acknowledged, in the right of his predecessor, St. Peter, as the head, or chief, of the Patriarchs. We shall see afterwards how this Patriarch, by adding temporal power and authority to spiritual, contrived to maintain a supreme ascendency, not only over all ecclesiastical persons, but civil governors and sovereign princes.

In the meantime, however, the Christian church was still considered, by the Roman emperors, in a hostile point of view. Even Trajan forgot, at times, the humanity of his character; and numbers of the Christians, in his reign and in that of his successor Adrian, were, under the pretence of a political necessity, subjected to all the rage of sanguinary persecution: nor was this intolerant zeal abated under those excellent princes the Antonines; and in the succeeding reign of Severus, the whole provinces of the empire were stained with the blood of the Christian martyrs.

In the third century, the Christian church enjoyed greater tranquillity; but this was owing less to a spirit of humanity in the Roman emperors, than to particular political circumstances, and chiefly to the short, violent, and turbulent reigns of many of those who swayed the sceptre.

The Christian doctrines were not more vigorously combated by the *secular* arm, than by the pens of the heathen philosophers. Porphyry, a Syrian by birth, and a man of great abilities, wrote a long and most laborious work against Christianity; and Philostratus, one of the most eminent rhetoricians of that age, contrived a new method of attack, which was by drawing artful comparisons between the life and doctrines of Christ and those of the ancient philosophers. These attacks, however, were, on the whole, rather serviceable than dangerous to the cause of Christianity, since they excited the zeal and abilities of many of the ablest Fathers of the church to defend its doctrines, and oppose, by their writings, the malevolent efforts of its enemies. The works of Origen—of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria—and of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage—are read at this day with much pleasure and profit; and, at the time they were written, contributed, in a most eminent degree, to the advancement of religion. It must, however, be observed, with regard to the works of Origen, that from one idea of his regarding the interpretation of the Scriptures, he exposes the Christian religion to be contaminated by every extravagance of the human brain. It was his notion that the Scriptures ought not always to be literally interpreted; and even where the literal sense was to be received, as in historical facts, that there was always a mystical and hidden meaning which these were intended to convey. It is easy to perceive, that as this leaves room for the utmost latitude of conjecture with regard to these hidden meanings, nothing could be more dangerous than the allowance

of such a mode of interpretation; and accordingly it was productive of innumerable errors and dissensions. Christianity, however, on the whole, made the most rapid progress in the third century. A great part of the Gauls, of Germany, and of Britain had now received the light of the Gospel.

In the fourth century, the Christian religion was alternately persecuted and cherished by the Roman emperors. Under Diocletian, there was, for many years, a most sanguinary persecution, which arose less from a spirit of cruelty in that emperor than from the easiness of his temper in giving way to the persuasions of his son-in-law, Galerius, and the remonstrances of the heathen priests.

The Church, we have seen, was restored to tranquillity by the accession of Constantine the Great, whose zeal for the propagation of Christianity, in the latter part of his reign, was as ardent—and, as some have thought, as intemperate—as that of its enemies for its destruction. His three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, without the genius of their father, inherited his religious principles, and were active in the extirpation of paganism and the promotion of Christianity.

We have seen how great was the reverse under the succeeding reign of Julian: genius, learning, philosophic moderation, heroic valour on the one hand, superstitious credulity, bigotry, and hypocrisy on the other, composed this singularly inconsistent character. The methods which he took to undermine the Christian religion, we have observed, were dictated by the most consummate policy and artifice. His attempts to reform the

pagan worship, and his depriving the Christians of the common privileges of citizens and of the benefit of the laws, were more fatal to the cause of religion than any other species of persecution. The succeeding emperors, Valentinian I., Valens, Gratian, and Valentinian II., contributed in a great degree to heal those wounds which Christianity had suffered from the attacks of Julian; but it was reserved for Theodosius to put a final period to the pagan superstition in the Roman empire.

In the history of the human mind there are no events more deserving of attention than the rise and fall of popular superstitions. As the polytheism, which had so long maintained its authority over the Roman empire, came to a final period at the time of which we now treat, it is worth our while to bestow some consideration upon an event of that magnitude and importance. The structure of the pagan religion in the Roman empire was so interwoven with its political constitution, as to possess a very strong hold on the minds of the people.

From the age of Numa to the reign of Gratian, the Romans preserved the regular succession of the several colleges of the sacerdotal order.* Fifteen pontiffs exercised supreme jurisdiction over all things and persons that were consecrated to the service of the gods, and determined all questions with regard to religion. Fifteen augurs observed the face of the heavens, and determined the success of the most important enterprises, according to the flight of birds. Fifteen keepers

* Gibbon's Roman Hist., c. 28.

of the Sibylline books consulted the records of future events. Six vestals guarded the sacred fire. Seven epulos prepared the table of the gods, conducted the solemn processions, and regulated the ceremonies of the annual festivals. The *flamens* of Jupiter, of Mars, and Quirinus, were considered as the ministers of the tutelar gods of Rome. The *king* of the sacrifices represented the person of Numa and of his successors in the religious functions, which could be performed only by royal hands. The confraternities of the Salians and the Lupercals practised the most ridiculous rites, by way of recommending themselves to the favour of the gods. The authority which the Roman priests had formerly obtained in the councils of the republic was gradually weakened by the establishment of the imperial dignity, and by the removal of the seat of the empire; but the veneration of their sacred character was still protected by the laws and manners of their country, and they still continued, more especially the college of pontiffs, to exercise in the capital, and sometimes in the provinces, the rights of their ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction. They received from the public revenue an ample salary, which liberally supplied the splendour of the priesthood, and the expenses of the religious worship of the state; as the service of the altar was not incompatible with the command of armies, the offices of pontiff or of augur were aspired to by the most illustrious of the Romans. Cicero, as well as Pliny, acknowledge that the office of augur was the height of their ambition. Even the Christian emperors did not refuse this ancient office of the highest dignity,

but accepted, like their predecessors, of the robe and ensigns of *Pontifex Maximus*. Gratian was the first who rejected those profane *insignia*. He applied to the service of the state or of the church the revenues of the priests and vestals, abolished their honours and immunities, and thus undermined the ancient fabric of Roman superstition, which had subsisted for eleven hundred years. Paganism was still, however, the constitutional religion of the senate. The temple in which they assembled was adorned by the statue and altar of Victory—a majestic female standing on a globe, with flowing garments, expanded wings, and in her hand a crown of laurel. The senators continued to take their solemn initiatory oaths upon the altar of the goddess, till this ancient monument was removed from its pedestal by the emperor Constantius. Julian had restored the altar of Victory; and Gratian once more abolished it, though he spared the public statues of the gods, which were in the temples of the city. In the time of Theodosius, a majority of the senate voted an application to the emperor to restore the altar and statue of Victory; and the cause of paganism was artfully and eloquently pleaded by the senator Symmachus, as that of Christianity by the celebrated Ambrose, archbishop of Milan.

The dispute was managed on both sides with great ability. The argument of Symmachus was certainly the best that could be brought in support of his cause; he balances the certain effects of an adherence to ancient customs with the uncertain consequences of innovation. If, says he, the past ages of the Roman state have been

crowned with glory and prosperity—if the devout people have obtained the blessings they solicited at the altars of the gods—is it not advisable to persevere in the same salutary practices, rather than risk the unknown dangers that may attend rash innovations? The reasoning was plausible. But the arguments of Ambrose had a more solid foundation; he exposed the futility of that blind and indolent maxim that *all* innovations are dangerous; he reprobated that absurd veneration for antiquity, which would not only maintain mankind in childhood and ignorance, but discourage every improvement of science, and replunge the human race into their original barbarism. After removing that veil which shut out the light, he displayed the beauty and excellence of the Christian system, and finally prevailed, to the conviction of the senators, against the able advocate of paganism. In a full meeting of that order, the question was solemnly proposed by Theodosius, whether the worship of Jesus Christ or of Jupiter should be the religion of the Romans. Jupiter was degraded and condemned by a large majority. The decrees of the senate which proscribed the worship of idols were ratified by the general consent of the people. The citizens flocked to the churches to receive the sacrament of baptism, and the temples of the pagan deities were abandoned to ruin and contempt.

The downfall of paganism in the capital was soon followed by its extirpation in the provinces.

Theodosius began by prohibiting sacrifices; and lest the temples should incite to the celebration of ancient ceremonies, he ordered them to be shut.

But the zeal of the bishops and fathers of the church exceeded their commission; they marched at the head of numerous bands of their new proselytes, and determined to abolish every remnant of idolatry by levelling the temples with the ground. Happily, the skill and solidity with which many of those ancient buildings had been constructed preserved them from absolute ruin; a few likewise were saved by being converted into Christian churches. The temple of Serapis, at Alexandria, in a part of which was the celebrated library of the Ptolemies, was one of the most magnificent structures of the East. Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria, had determined its downfall. The priests took arms in defence of their god, but were finally overpowered by the strength of numbers; the temple was ransacked, the library pillaged and destroyed, and the awful statue of the god himself underwent the general fate. The catastrophe of Serapis is eloquently described by Gibbon. A great number of plates of different metals, artificially joined together, composed the majestic figure of the deity, who touched on either side the walls of the sanctuary. The aspect of Serapis, his sitting posture, and the sceptre which he bore in his left hand, were extremely similar to the ordinary representations of Jupiter. It was confidently reported, that if any impious hand should dare to violate the majesty of the god, the heavens and the earth would instantly return to their original chaos. An intrepid soldier, animated by zeal, and armed with a weighty battle-axe, ascended the ladder—and even the Christian multitude expected with some anxiety the event of

the combat. He aimed a vigorous stroke against the cheek of Serapis; the cheek fell to the ground; the thunder was still silent, and both the heavens and the earth continued to preserve their accustomed order and tranquillity. The victorious soldier repeated his blows: the huge idol was overthrown and broken in pieces, and the limbs of Serapis were ignominiously dragged through the streets of Alexandria. His mangled carcase was burnt in the amphitheatre, amid the shouts of the populace; and many persons attributed their conversion to this discovery of the impotence of the tutelar deity. After the fall of Serapis, some hopes were entertained by the pagans that the indignation of the gods would be expressed by the refusal of the Nile's annual inundation; but the waters began to swell with most unusual rapidity. They now comforted themselves that the same indignation was to be expressed by a deluge; but were mortified to find at last that the inundation brought with it no other than its usual salutary and fertilizing effects.*

Theodosius was too good a politician to adopt a persecuting system. The temples, it is true, were shut up, sacrifices prohibited, and idols destroyed; but still the ancient opinions were entertained and tolerated; no universal conformity was requisite, and the civil and military honours of the empire were bestowed without distinction on Christians

* The Egyptians remarked, that when the Nile did not rise to the height of 12 cubits, a famine was generally the consequence—as was likewise the case when it rose above 16 cubits. The register of the river was a well within the temple of Serapis, at Memphis.

and on pagans. The utmost freedom was allowed in speech and in writing on the subject of religion, as is evident by what remains of the works of Zozimus, Eunapius, and other teachers of the Platonic school, who attacked Christianity with the utmost virulence. There was great wisdom in this conduct of Theodosius. Paganism fell by a rapid, yet by a gentle decline; and twenty-eight years after the death of Theodosius, the vestiges of the ancient religion were scarcely discernible in the Roman empire.

A superstition, in many respects as absurd and irrational, began to pollute the Christian church in those ages, and still continues to maintain a very extensive influence. This was the worship of saints and relics. At Rome, the bones of St. Peter and St. Paul—or rather what were believed to be such—were removed from their graves one hundred and fifty years after their death, and deposited in magnificent shrines. In the following ages, Constantinople, which could boast no treasures of that kind within her own walls, had recourse to the provinces, and acquired from them the supposed bodies of St. Andrew, St. Luke, and St. Timothy, after these had been dead for three hundred years. But these sacred treasures were appropriated solely to the churches of the capitals of the empire; other cities and their churches borrowed portions of these older relics; and where they had not interest to procure these, their priests had dexterity to discover relics of their own. The possession of these bones was found to conduce very much to the acquisition of more substantial treasures. It was easy to

find skeletons, and to give them names; but it was necessary to prove their authenticity and virtue, by making these bones perform miracles. Artifice and roguery had a powerful assistant here in popular credulity; and even natural events, when ascribed to the mediation of saints and martyrs, became proofs of their divine and supernatural power. It was easier for the vulgar mind to approach in prayer the image, or simply the idea of a holy man—one who had been on earth subject to like passions with themselves—than to raise their imaginations to the tremendous and incomprehensible nature of the Supreme Power: hence the prayers to saints, and the peculiar devotion to one out of many—as he to whom most frequent court was paid would be naturally held to take the greatest interest in the welfare of his votary.

As the objects of religion were become more familiar to the imagination, it was not wonderful that such rites and ceremonies should be introduced as were best fitted to affect the senses of the vulgar. The pompous pageantry of the pagan superstition was soon rivalled by that of the Christian; and as the polytheism of the former found a parallel in the numerous train of saints and martyrs of the latter, the superstitions and absurd ceremonies of both came very soon to have a near resemblance.

The attachment to the pagan systems of philosophy, particularly the Platonic, which found its votaries among many of the Christian doctors at this period, led to a variety of innovations in point of doctrine, which in a little time acquired

so deep a root as to be considered as essential parts of the Christian system. Such, for example, was the notion of an intermediate state, in which the soul was to be purified by fire from the corruptions and vices of the flesh: hence also the celibacy of the priests, and various other notions which yet prevail in the church of Rome, and have in the minds of the people acquired from time an equal authority with the express institutions of the gospel.

With regard to the celibacy of the priests, we know that in the *primitive* church all the orders of the clergy were allowed to marry.* It was, however, thought, that as abstinence and mortification was a Christian duty, there was more sanctity and virtue in celibacy than in wedlock.

Monastic institutions had likewise their origin in the fourth century, the most destructive species of superstition that ever took hold of the minds of mankind. But of these and of their progress—of the diversities of their orders, and of their rapid increase over all the Christian kingdoms, we shall afterwards treat more at large, in our account of the state of the church in the age of Charlemagne.

In our next chapter we shall pursue the outlines of the history of the Romans, to the entire extinction of the empire of the west—a period which finishes the delineation of ancient history.

* 1st Epistle to Timothy, ch. iii.

CHAPTER V.

Last period of the Roman History—Arcadius and Honorius —Theodosius II.—His Code of Laws—Attila—Progress of the Goths—Gothic Kingdom of Italy.

We have now arrived at the last period of the empire in the west, when, every thing tending irresistibly to decline, prognosticated a speedy and absolute extinction of the Roman name in those regions where it first was known.

The barbarous nations, we had observed, from frequent inroads, though most commonly repulsed, had yet gradually begun to establish themselves in the frontier provinces: we had remarked the progress they made in the reigns of Valentinian, Valens, Gratian, and Theodosius; but at this period our attention was solicited to the consideration of an object of peculiar importance, the extinction of paganism in the Roman empire, and the full establishment of the Christian religion. This great event naturally led to a brief retrospective view of the progress of Christianity during the four preceding centuries. We now proceed to a rapid delineation of this last period of the history of the Romans—from the end of the reign of Theodosius, to the fall of the Western empire.

Theodosius the Great, who, by the death of Valentinian II., enjoyed the undivided sovereignty of the empires of the East and West, made a par-

tition upon his death-bed between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorious, assigned the Eastern empire to the former, and the Western to the latter.* At the time of the accession of these princes, Arcadius was seventeen, and Honorious ten years of age. Their ministers were *Rufinus* and *Stilicho*, to whom Theodosius had intrusted the government during the nonage of his sons. Rufinus, a man of no principle, but of great ambition, soon became jealous of an associate in power; and in order to gratify his mean ambition, he considered it a small matter to make a sacrifice of his country. Courting his own elevation in the public ruin, he invited the barbarian nations to invade the empire.† The Huns were not slow in obeying the summons. They poured down from Caucasus, and overspread in an instant Armenia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Syria. A band of the Goths at the same time, under the command of Alaric, made dreadful havoc in the provinces between the Adriatic and Constantinople. Stilicho, the emperor's chief general, who was possessed of

* The following was the division of the empire between these princes:—Honorius had the sovereignty of Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Britain; with the provinces of Noricum, Pannonia, and Dalmatia. Arcadius governed Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, and the whole country, from the Lower Danube to the confines of Persia and Æthiopia. Illyrium was divided between the two princes.—Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxix.

† That Rufinus carried on a treasonable correspondence with the barbarians has not, I believe, been directly proved, but his frequent visits to the camp of the Goths, and the circumstance of their sparing his estates amidst the general devastation, were considered as strong presumptive evidence of his treason.

excellent military abilities, made head against these barbarians with considerable success; until, by the infamous machination of his rival Rufinus, the greater part of his troops were compelled to leave their commander, and purposely called off upon another service, at the very eve of an engagement with Alaric, which in all probability would have given the Romans a decisive victory. Stilicho was obliged to retreat with precipitation; but this involuntary dishonour was amply revenged by his troops, who no sooner returned to the Eastern capital, than, with furious indignation, they massacred Rufinus in the presence of the emperor Arcadius.*

Alaric the Goth, in the mean time, ravaged Greece, took the city of Athens, and, pouring down on the Peloponnesus, laid waste the whole country. He was again opposed by Stilicho, whose success was a second time disappointed by the eunuch Eutropius, who had succeeded Rufinus in his influence over the weak and dissolute Arcadius. This abandoned minion made a peace with Alaric, and even bestowed upon the Goth the government of eastern Illyria, under which denomination was at that time comprehended the whole of Greece. How miserable must have been the abasement of the Eastern empire at this time, when the Goths had thus established themselves under the very walls of the capital!

The influence of the eunuch Eutropius was unbounded with his sovereign: but though courted,

* A scene which is described by the poet Claudian (lib. ii. in Rufin.) in strong, but horrid colours.

as we may suppose, like all other ministers, by the parasites of the court, he was deservedly detested by the people. A striking monument of his fears from the popular odium, and the apprehension of undergoing that fate which he merited, appears in that most sanguinary of the Roman statutes, the law of Arcadius and Honorius for the punishment of those who should conspire the death of the emperor's ministers. A capital punishment was inflicted on the offender himself; it is declared that his children shall be perpetually infamous, incapable of all inheritance, of all office or employment; that they shall languish in want and misery, so that life itself shall be a punishment to them, and death a consolation.* Amid the other laws of Arcadius and Honorius, many of which are remarkable for their clemency and moderation, this sanguinary statute would strike us with just surprise, were it not known to have been framed by the infamous Eutropius, for the security of his own precarious authority, and as a shelter for himself against the public odium.

Secure as he now imagined himself in the favour of his sovereign, and defended by the terror of his own uncontrolled authority, this base eunuch endeavoured to engross the whole power of the government. He caused the weak Arcadius to create him a Patrician, to honour him with the title of *father to the emperor*, and at length to confer on him the consulship. His image, preceded by the fasces, was carried in triumph

* Ut his denique perpetua egestate sordentibus, sit et mors solatium et vita supplicium.—*Codex. Just.* l. 9. tit. 8. l. 5.

through all the cities of the East, but was more generally saluted with hissing than with applause. At length that insolence, which, in mean souls, is the usual attendant of undeserved elevation, so far transported him beyond the bounds of decorum, that having affronted the empress Eudoxia, a high-spirited princess, she painted his character in such colours to her husband Arcadius, that he dismissed him from all his dignities, gave him up to the cries of the people, who demanded justice upon him as a traitor, and caused him to be publicly beheaded.

Arcadius, however, was not emancipated from his bondage; he only changed his governor: for Gainas, a Goth, the rival of Eutropius, and who had been instrumental in accelerating his downfall, succeeded to his whole power and influence. He would have proved a dangerous minister, as he aimed at nothing less than a declared share of the empire; but his ambition was checked in the beginning of his career, for he lost his life in an attack made by the Huns, in the neighbourhood of the Danube.

Alaric, we observed, had obtained from Arcadius the sovereignty of Illyria. This ambitious prince was not so to be satisfied. His army proclaimed him king of the Visigoths, and he prepared to penetrate into Italy, and take possession of Rome. He passed the Alps, and Rome trembled for her safety, but was preserved by the policy, or rather treachery of Stilicho, who commanded the armies of Honorius. He drew Alaric into a negotiation, under the notion of giving him a settlement beyond the Alps, and then

suddenly fell upon his army, while unsuspicious of an attack; Alaric was forced to return to Illyria, but meditated a full and terrible revenge.

On this occasion, Honorius celebrated at Rome a splendid triumph, and a monument was erected, recording, in the proudest terms, the eternal defeat of the Goths, *Gætarum nationem in omne ævum domitant.** But this vain *eternity* was bounded by the revolution of a very few months.

The Gothic prince, at the head of an immense army, appeared again in Italy, and determined to overthrow the capital of Honorius. Rome was panic-struck; resistance appeared fruitless; and Stilicho exerted his political talents in negotiating a truce with Alaric, for the payment of an immense sum of money; 4000 pounds weight of gold was the sum stipulated, on promise of which, Alaric returned again into Illyria. This was the last public service of Stilicho; the man who had repeatedly saved his country from destruction, fell a victim at last to the jealousy of his contemptible sovereign, and to the machinations of a rival, Olympius, who wished to supplant him in his power. He was beheaded by the mandate of Honorius. The character and talents of Stilicho are recorded in the poems of Claudian, whose genius deserved to have been the ornament of a better age. Alaric, soon after, made his demand for the promised tribute. It was contemptuously refused by Honorius, and the incensed Goth again entered Italy, and with amazing celerity penetrated to the gates of Rome: he

* Mascou, Hist. of Anc. Germ., viii. 12.

made himself master of the Tiber, cut off the city from all supply, both by land and water, and reduced it to such extremity, that deputies were sent by Honorius, who again purchased a cessation of hostilities for 5000 pounds weight of gold and 30,000 of silver; but to secure its payment, the Goth insisted that several of the principal citizens should put their children into his hands as hostages. On these terms Alaric again returned.

The Alani, Suevi, and Vandals, taking advantage of these disorders in the Western empire, passed the Pyrenean mountains, and desolated all Spain. Their ravages were beyond imagination dreadful, and these calamities were aggravated by a pestilence and famine, which then raged with fury in that unhappy country. The barbarians divided the kingdom, and were no sooner settled in their possessions than, by a wonderful reverse of character, they became a mild, humane, and industrious people. They were now known under the general denomination of Vandals. The Romans kept possession of that part of Spain now called New Castile, and the Vandals had all the rest of the kingdom.

Alaric now renewed his demand on Honorius for the stipulated sum; still it was refused, with equal perfidy and imprudence. The Goth had been too forbearing; his patience was at length exhausted, and he laid siege to Rome for the third time, took the city, and abandoned it to be pillaged by his troops.* Still, however, he

* See a very minute and curious picture of the state of Rome, and the manners of the Romans at this period, drawn

was humane in his revenge; he ordered his soldiers to be sparing of blood; he commanded that no senator should be put to death; that the honour of the women should remain inviolate; that the churches should be sanctuaries to all who betook themselves to them for shelter; and that the public edifices should be preserved from destruction; and these orders were faithfully obeyed. Alaric might have reigned in Italy, but his views extended now to Sicily, and to the conquest of Africa. For these great enterprises he was busied in preparation when he died suddenly, leaving for his successor, his brother Ataulphus. The Goths had a custom of concealing the burying-place of their great men. They turned aside the current of a small river, and dug a grave in the bed, there burying Alaric, and then returning the water to its course.

Honorius, equally indolent and despicable as his brother Arcadius, was so far from seizing the opportunity of Alaric's death to regain the lost provinces of the empire, that he made a treaty with Ataulphus, and, having broken it with his usual perfidy, the Goth was naturally provoked to further encroachments. Honorius was glad to purchase a peace by giving him some of those provinces which still remained to the Romans in Spain, together with his sister Placidia in marriage. Thus we see the Goths gradually uniting themselves with the empire, and acquiring a connexion by the rights of blood with those

by Mr. Gibbon chiefly from Ammianus Marcellinus (lib. xiv. c. 6, and lib. xxviii. c. 4.)—Gibbon's *Rom. Hist.* chap. 31.

dominions of which they aspired at the possession. Honorius, much about the same time, allowed to the Burgundians, another tribe of the northern barbarians, a just title to their conquests in Gaul. Ataulphus the Goth died soon after, recommending to his brother and successor to preserve the friendly alliance which they had formed with the Romans.

Meantime, Arcadius, in the east, was wholly governed by his empress Eudoxia. This weak and dissolute prince died in the year 408, leaving the Eastern empire to his son, Theodosius II., a child of seven years of age.

Pulcheria, the elder sister of Theodosius, on the death of her father, took the sole government of the empire, in the name of her infant brother. She was a prudent and intelligent princess. The Eastern empire enjoyed under her administration, which the weakness of her brother allowed to be of forty years' continuance, all the blessings of good order and tranquillity.*

At this time (the beginning of the fifth century,)

* "Pulcheria," says Mr. Gibbon, "alone discharged the important task of instructing her brother in the arts of government, but her precepts may countenance some suspicion of her capacity, or of the purity of her intentions. She taught him to maintain a grave and majestic deportment, to walk, to hold his robes, to seat himself on his throne in a manner worthy of a great prince; to abstain from laughter; to listen with condescension; to return suitable answers; to assume by turns a serious or placid countenance; in a word, to represent with grace and dignity the external figure of a Roman emperor. But Theodosius was never excited to support the weight and glory of an illustrious name."—GIBBON, *Decl. and Fall*, ch. xxxii.

in the west of Europe, is supposed to have been laid the foundation of the French monarchy by Pharamond. But of this, and the doubts attending the existence of this prince, we shall afterwards treat more particularly under the first period of modern history. Honorius died in the year 423. The death of a weak and of a vicious prince would, in former times, have been accounted a blessing, but the empire was now labouring under that universal decay which was beyond a remedy.

It has been justly remarked that, notwithstanding the despicable character of both these emperors, Arcadius and Honorius, their laws, with few exceptions, breathe often the most admirable sentiments, and the wisest political principles: but this proves no more than that there were some men of abilities who were employed in framing them;—it was another thing to enforce their observance; and while that was neglected, as the deplorable situation of the empire too well declares, they were words without meaning, empty sounds, to which the public adminstration of government was a daily contradiction.

Theodosius II. is famous in history for the celebrated code of laws which bears his name. In the view of reforming the complicated system of jurisprudence of which the multiplicity of contradictory statutes formed a most inconsistent mass, he caused a code to be composed solely of the laws of the Christian emperors, which from that time he declared should be the only statutes in force. The new laws added from time to time to this collection were called *Novellæ*, and this code was enforced by Valentinian III., the successor of

Honorius in the Western empire, as it was by Theodosius in the East.* It is curious to remark that this code of laws subsisted only for ninety years in the East, though in the West it remained in force after the destruction of the empire, and was partly adopted by the Visigoths. Genseric, king of the Vandals, in the meantime established a formidable power in Africa; he soon made himself master of the Roman province,† and while Theodosius was obliged to employ his whole force against the Huns, that barbarian procured himself to be acknowledged for an independent sovereign, who had a just title to his conquests.

The Huns were at this time governed by two brothers, Attila and Bleda. Attila joined to great courage and excellent political talents an unbounded ambition. The two brothers, after overrunning Tartary to the borders of China, crossed the Danube, and laid waste the Roman provinces of Mœsia and Thrace. Attila, impatient of a divided power, murdered his brother, and proceeded to

* It is not a little extraordinary that Mr. Gibbon, in the whole of his account of the reign of Theodosius II., has never once mentioned this celebrated code of laws, which is certainly not the least remarkable circumstance relative to the life and character of this insignificant emperor.

† In this barbarian war, Carthage, which, in the course of five hundred and eighty-five years from the time of its destruction by the younger Scipio, had risen to the rank of a splendid and opulent city, under the government of a Roman proconsul, was taken by Genseric, the inhabitants completely stripped of their wealth, and all the lands of the proconsular province divided by the conqueror amongst his Vandal officers.—PROCOP. *de Bello Vandal*, l. i. c. v.—GIBBON, chap. xxxiii.

extend his conquests from the eastern ocean to the *Sinus Codanus*, or the Baltic. Theodosius attempted to soothe him by conferring on him the title of General of the Romans, but was soon glad to purchase a peace of his general at the price of 6000 pounds weight of gold, and a tribute of 2000 pounds, to be paid annually in all time to come. Theodosius became more despicable in the eyes of Attila by an unsuccessful attempt to procure his assassination, which Atilla pardoned, though at the same time with this severe reproach, that he considered him as a vile and perfidious slave, who had traitorously conspired to murder his master.* Theodosius II. died soon after, having reigned ingloriously for forty-two years. He left an only daughter, who was married to Valentinian III., emperor of the West, but the imbecility of this prince prevented him from availing himself of that title to both empires. Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius, who had in reality governed the empire during the whole reign of her weak and insignificant brother, now boldly placed herself on the throne, and at the same time married Marcianus, a soldier of fortune, and their joint title was acknowledged by the Eastern empire. The West was in the lowest state of imbecility. Rome, unable to defend her provinces, allowed them to drop off without an attempt to retain them. It was at this time that the Britons, by a very melancholy deputation, implored the Romans to

* See Gibbon, chap. xxxiv., for a detail of this transaction, curiously descriptive of the character and mode of life of the Huns.

protect them against the Picts and Scots.* "We are," said they, "in the utmost misery, nor have we any refuge left us; the barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea drives us back upon the barbarians." In return to this miserable supplication, the Romans gave them to understand that their own situation was such that they could now afford them nothing but compassion. The Britons, therefore, in despair, made an application to the Saxons, a people settled at the mouth of the river Elbe. These, with the Angles from Jutland, made themselves masters of the country which they were invited to protect, and established by degrees the Heptarchy, or seven distinct kingdoms, which subsisted till the age of Charlemagne, when they were united into one monarchy by Egbert. But of these transactions we shall treat more particularly in our account of the first period of the history of Britain.

Attila in the meantime meditated the total de-

* The feeble and distracted state of the empire had now for a long course of years allowed no attention to be given to this distant province. The legions had been gradually withdrawn, and about forty years before this period, under the reign of Honorius, the Romans had entirely left the island, and Britain was regarded even by the empire as an independent country.—See PROCOP. *de Bello Vandal.* l. i. c. 2. BEDE, *Hist. Gent. Anglican.* lib. i. c. 12. GIBBON'S *Rom. Hist.* chap. xxxi. The nature of the government that subsisted in Britain, and the state of that country during this interval of forty years, till the Saxon invasion, can only be conjectured. Mr. Gibbon has given a fanciful picture of it, towards the end of the chapter above quoted. According to his idea, the country was ruled by the authority of the clergy, the nobles, and the municipal towns.

struction of the empire. He hesitated at first whether to turn his arms towards the east or the west.* Genseric, king of the Vandals, ambitious of a share in the general devastation, invited the Hun to begin his attack upon the Gaul. Attila began his progress at the head of 500,000 men, the Gepidæ, Rugii, Turcilingi, and Ostrogoths, each led by their own prince, though all under the banners of Attila.

Ætius, at that time general of the Romans, and a man of remarkable abilities, had the address to render Genseric the Vandal apprehensive of his own safety, and to persuade him to join the Romans against the invaders. The Visigoths, too, took part with the empire, and the army of Ætius was likewise increased by the Franks, Burgundians, and several other nations, from the universal dread of the arms of Attila. The hostile powers came to a decisive engagement in the plains of Champagne: 162,000 men are supposed to have fallen in this battle.† Attila was overpowered by the superior military skill of Ætius, and obliged to make a precipitate retreat. Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, was killed in the engagement.

But Attila, though foiled in this attempt, re-

* Previous to his determination, he sent a defiance to both the courts, and his ambassadors saluted both the emperors in the same tone of authority. "Attila, *my* lord and *thy* lord, commands thee to provide a palace for his immediate reception."—GIBBON, chap. XXXV.

† "Bellum atrox," says Jornandes, "multiplex, immane, pertinax, cui simile nulla usquam narrat antiquitas: ubi talia gesta referentur ut nihil esset quod in vitâ suâ conspicere potuisset egregius, qui hujus miraculi privaretur aspectu."

turned in the following year with fresh forces. The Romans had not as yet had time to recruit; they retreated before the barbarians, and left the country without defence. The districts of Venetia and Liguria being evacuated by their inhabitants, part of these betook themselves for shelter to the islands in the Adriatic gulph, where they built huts and laid the first foundation of the illustrious city and state of Venice.

Valentinian III., shut up in Rome, sent to Attila to sue for peace, and promised an immense tribute. On these terms the Hun withdrew, and the Romans were soon after delivered by his death from the terror of his name and arms. He was known in the empire by the epithet of the Scourge of God.

His dominions were ruined by the dissensions of his sons, among whom they were divided. They formed distinct settlements in Illyria, Mœsia, Dacia, and at the mouth of the Danube, and several of them became the allies of the empire. The Ostrogoths received from Marcian all Pannonia, from upper Mœsia to Noricum, and from Dalmatia to the Danube.

Valentinian, sunk in debaucheries, and the dupe of his parasites, was persuaded by false insinuations to destroy his general Ætius, the man who had saved the empire from absolute destruction; but the abandoned prince himself was soon after assassinated by one of his favourites.

A minute detail of the transactions of the times at which we are now arrived would be equally tedious and unimportant. We shall content ourselves with the leading facts. Marcian was suc-

ceeded in the Eastern empire by Leo, who, upon his death, bequeathed the empire to Zeno, a weak, wicked, and profligate man. The empire of the West, after Valentinian III., had for some time a succession of princes, or rather of names, for history records of them no transactions which merit the smallest notice. The Gothic nations continued their progress. Euric, king of the Visigoths, had subdued almost the whole of Spain as well as the southern part of Gaul. Nepos, who then held the empire of the West, sent his general Orestes to oppose the conquests of Euric, but the general turned his arms against his prince, and, dethroning Nepos, raised to the empire his own son Romulus, surnamed Augustus, or *Augustulus*. In him the empire of the West was doomed to come to a final period.

Odoacer, a prince of the Heruli, with a formidable army, had found his way into Italy. He attacked Pavia, where Orestes had fled for security, and, having taken that city, and put to death Orestes, he consented to give Augustulus his life on his resigning the throne. The terms were complied with, and Odoacer was now in reality what he styled himself, *king of Italy*. Thus ended the Western empire of the Romans, having subsisted, from the building of Rome, 1224 years.*

* In a fragment of a poem of Gray's, which has been preserved by Mr. Mason, a very fine passage occurs, painting, in all the force of his splendid style of poetic description, the irruption of the barbarous nations into Italy:—

"Oft o'er the trembling nations, from afar,
Has Scythia breathed the living cloud of war;
And where the deluge burst, with sweeping sway,
Their arms, their kings, their gods were rolled away,

As

Ingenious men may point out a variety of internal as well as external circumstances, which had their operation in producing the decline, and at length the ruin of this immense fabric; but they may be all reduced to one single head. The fall of the Roman empire was the inevitable effect of its overgrown extension. The commonwealth subsisted by the virtuous and patriotic ardour of the citizens; but the passion for conquest, which at first found sufficient scope in the domestic wars among the Italian states, was, after their reduction, necessarily extended to a distance. Remote dominion relaxed the patriotic affection, which of necessity grew the weaker the more extensive were its objects. The vices of the conquered nations infected the victorious legions, and foreign luxuries corrupted their commanders. Selfish interest took the place of public virtue; the people were enslaved by despots, who, regarding as the first object the security of their own power, found it often their wisest policy to abase that martial spirit which was no less formidable to the master of the state than to its foreign enemies. Thus the military character of the Romans went gradually to decay, because it was purposely depressed by the emperors; and thus their extensive dominions

As oft have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-eyed myriads of the Baltic coast;
The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles and her golden fields;
With grim delight, the brood of winter view
A brighter day, and heavens of azure hue,
Scent the new fragrance of the blushing rose,
And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.

MASON'S *Life of Gray*, p. 196.

wanting their necessary support of brave, of virtuous, and of disciplined troops, fell an easy prey to that torrent of barbarians which overwhelmed them.

Historians universally agree that the Romans gained by their change of masters. Odoacer retained the imperial laws, the officers, and the form of government; and he diminished the taxes. He, with an affected show of moderation, sent to Zeno the imperial ornaments, and requested for himself only the dignity of patrician, which Zeno had the prudence not to refuse. This spiritless emperor was now embroiled with the Ostrogoths, who were settled in Pannonia and Thrace, and were governed by two kings of the name of Theodoric; the younger had been educated at Constantinople, and loaded with honours by Zeno. At the request of Theodoric, Zeno granted him permission to attempt the conquest of Italy, transferring it to him as a kingdom in case he should succeed in wresting it from Odoacer. Zeno died soon after. Theodoric, followed by the whole nation of the Ostrogoths, broke into Italy with impetuous fury. Odoacer met him between Aquileia and the Julian Alps, but was defeated. A second engagement ensued at Verona, and a third on the banks of the river Addua, in all of which Theodoric was successful. Odoacer was forced to shut himself up in Ravenna, where for two years and a half he sustained an obstinate siege. At length, compelled by famine, he was driven to a negotiation, by which he surrendered all Italy to Theodoric, reserving to himself the titles of royalty. What the motive was is now uncertain, but Theodoric, a few

days after, put him to death with his own hand—a deed which, considering the excellent and generous character of that prince, there is every reason to presume had a just cause.

Italy had begun to taste of happiness under Odoacer; it was still increased by the new monarch. Theodoric showed what profound political talents are capable of effecting even in the most unpromising situation, and how much public happiness is dependent on the virtues and talents of the sovereign. I shall afterwards have occasion pretty fully to describe the administration, and illustrate the character, of this excellent prince. Without drawing a sword after the death of Odoacer, he enjoyed the kingdom of Italy as if it had been his natural inheritance. He allied himself with the barbarous nations around him. He married the daughter of Clovis, king of the Franks, who, in the year 486, had annihilated the Roman power in Gaul; he gave one of his daughters to Alaric, king of the Visigoths; another to Gondebald, king of the Burgundians; and his sister to Thrasmond, king of the Vandals; thus establishing a bond of union and harmony among the neighbouring princes, but, where it was not observed, enforcing it by his arms.

In the latter part of his life, having his temper embittered by suspicions of treasonable conspiracies, he became for a while severe, and even cruel, in his administration. The learned Boetius, who had formerly been high in his favour, falling under these suspicions, was put to death. During the confinement preceding his death, he composed that excellent treatise, "De Consolatione Philo-

sophiæ." The heart of Theodoric awaking afterwards to that humanity of disposition which was natural to him, he sank into deep remorse and melancholy, and died at the age of seventy-four. He was succeeded by his grandson Athalaric; during whose infancy his mother Amalasonta held the reins of government with such admirable political wisdom and moderation, that the people were not sensible of the loss of her father.

While such was the state of Italy under its Gothic sovereigns, the empire of the East was under the government of Justinian. This prince began his reign with no favourable dispositions towards him on the part of his subjects, as it was known that he had countenanced the commission of great enormities, and been concerned in several assassinations of those whom he either feared or hated. The truth is, that if the Roman name seems to rise from its abasement for a while during the reign of this prince, it was less from the virtues, talents, or abilities of the emperor, than from the uncommon merit of his generals; yet to these generals he behaved with the most shameful ingratitude. He was in his own character a weak, vain, and despotic man; but he was fond of study; and if he had any talent, it was in jurisprudence. He was a rancorous enemy to the ancient Greek philosophy, and he abolished by an edict the schools of Athens, which had produced a constant succession of teachers from the days of Socrates, during a period of nine centuries.* Justinian wished to bring about a league of amity with the

* See Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 112, et seq.

Persians, who were dangerous enemies to the empire; but Cabades, their sovereign, treating his embassy with contempt, Justinian sent against them his general Belisarius, who had already signalized himself by his services. He defeated them at Dara; they revenged their disgrace, however, in the following year, by gaining a victory over Belisarius at Callinicum, who was prompted to engage at a disadvantage, from the intemperate ardour of his troops. This want of success Justinian thought proper to punish by recalling Belisarius, who was doomed to be often the sport of fortune, and the victim of weakness, caprice, and ingratitude. Cabades the Persian dying at this time, was succeeded by Chosroes, an able prince, to whom Justinian meanly a second time proffered terms of accommodation. Chosroes granted him a peace, but upon the most humiliating conditions. He received 11,000 pounds weight of gold, and several important fortresses.

The city of Constantinople had been harassed, during the two last reigns, with violent popular factions, which had arisen from the intemperate fondness of the people for the diversions of the circus—a striking indication of the most irretrievable degeneracy of national character. The factions took the names of the green, the blue, and the red, from the dresses worn by the charioteers of the different parties. Justinian espoused with zeal the faction of the blue, while his queen Theodora, with equal intemperance, took part with the green. Her party proceeded so far as publicly to insult the emperor; and, upon the punishment of some of their ringleaders, took up arms to avenge

their cause, and proclaimed Hypatius, a man allied to the blood-royal, for their monarch. Justinian appeared and offered indemnity, on condition of their returning to their duty, but they compelled him to retreat for safety to his palace. The injured Belisarius, who had not forgot his allegiance or his affection for his country, shocked at these proceedings, speedily assembled the troops, and, attacking the rebels with a dreadful slaughter, at length brought all into submission. Justinian meanly proclaimed this deplorable victory over the whole empire.

Belisarius was now again to be employed in more glorious services. Gelimer, king of the Vandals in Africa, having mounted the throne by deposing Hilderic the lawful monarch, Justinian sent a remonstrance in favour of Hilderic, which Gelimer treated with contempt. He resolved to carry war into Africa, and the conduct of it was committed to Belisarius, who in a few months routed Gelimer, abolished entirely the monarchy of the Vandals, and completed the conquest of Africa. Ungenerous suspicions again influenced the weak Justinian against this man, who was the support and honour of his empire; and Belisarius was obliged to return to Constantinople to vindicate his injured reputation. He came off with glory, and a triumph was decreed him, which was adorned by the captive Gelimer.

It is not a little surprising to see enterprises of the highest importance begun and carried through by a weak and imprudent monarch; but Justinian was fortunate in his generals, though never prince was less worthy of being so.

Athalaric, the Goth, a weak and debauched prince, had died in Italy, of which the government was still in the hands of his mother, Amalasonta. After the death of her son, she had raised to the throne her cousin Theodatus, who infamously repaid that service by putting her to death. Justinian, who considered himself as the protector of the Gothic monarchy, in order to avenge this atrocious deed, sent Belisarius into Italy with an army. He marched to the gates of Rome, which surrendered without an attack; he possessed himself of the city, and with 5000 men undertook to defend it against 100,000 of the rebel Ostrogoths, who sat down to besiege him. The particulars of this war it is not to our purpose minutely to trace. It is sufficient to say, that after various successes, the Goths themselves, filled with admiration at the character of Belisarius, requested him to accept of the crown of Italy; but that generous and heroic man refused the offer of a kingdom, incapable of betraying the interests of his sovereign, although he had repeatedly experienced his ingratitude. He declared that he had sufficient glory in reducing the capital of the Western empire to submission to its ancient masters.

Italy again attempted to withdraw herself from the newly-imposed yoke of the empire. Totila, the present viceroy, inherited the courage and the virtues of Theodoric; he raised a considerable army, and, defeating the Romans, made himself master of Lucania, Apulia, Calabria, and Naples. Belisarius was sent a second time into Italy, but with so inconsiderable a body of troops that he

was obliged to shut himself up in Ravenna. Rome, holding out for the emperor, was in the meantime besieged and taken by Totila, who generously spared the inhabitants; and, convoking the senate, drew a striking picture of the difference between the gentle government of Theodoric and Amalasonta, and their late oppressions; and concluded with a severe reproach for their treachery to a nation to whom they were so highly indebted. Totila had resolved to destroy Rome; but the city was saved by a remonstrance from Belisarius, who convinced the Goth, that to save that capital, the glory of the world, would contribute more to his honour than to destroy it. Totila contented himself with dispersing its inhabitants; but in this he acted imprudently, for Belisarius immediately took possession and defended it with vigour and success. At length, the weakness of his army, and the increasing strength of the Goths, obliged that able general entirely to evacuate Italy, and to return to Constantinople, where the wealth which he had accumulated threw an unfavourable stain upon his character, which it is not easy to remove. Totila retook Rome, which he rebuilt and new peopled; afterwards, however, the imperial arms meeting with some success in Italy, he became desirous of coming to an accommodation with Justinian. The Goth offered large concessions and an annual tribute, and obliged himself to serve the emperor in all his wars. These terms, however, were obstinately and haughtily refused. Such is the character of a little mind, mean, servile, and submissive under the pressure of adversity; imperious,

domineering, and inflexible upon the smallest glimpse of prosperous fortune. Contemning the offers of allegiance from Totila, he sent a more powerful army against him than he had ever sent into Italy. Narses, an eunuch, but an able general, commanded; and in a decisive engagement in the duchy of Urbino, the Goths were defeated, and the gallant Totila slain in battle. In a second engagement his successor, Theia, met with a similar fate; all Italy, in fine, was reconquered; and the Gothic monarchy, founded by Theodoric, was now extinguished. Theodoric and Totila may be compared to the greatest men of antiquity; and the Gothic nation, and particularly the Ostrogoths, who settled in Italy, instead of that contempt with which they have been treated by Procopius and some other writers, deserve, in many respects, the greatest regard and veneration.

Narses, who had destroyed the Gothic monarchy, and completed the conquest of Italy, governed that kingdom with great ability for thirteen years, when he was recalled, and ignominiously treated by Justin, successor to Justinian, a weak, imprudent, and voluptuous prince. It is said, that in revenge he invited the Lombards into Italy; a fact which is not at all improbable. These were one of the many nations from Scandinavia, but whose distinct origin is very uncertain; they overrun, and made themselves masters of the greatest part of the country in the year 568.

The final and irretrievable loss of Italy was not the only misfortune with which Justin had to

struggle. Chosroes, that scourge of the empire, broke the fifty years' truce which he had concluded with Justinian; and the Romans were now again involved in a Persian war, which was not terminated till several years afterwards, under the reign of Heraclius, in the 626th year of the Christian era.

A remarkable revolution now awaited the empire, which, from a slender beginning, effected a surprising change on the great theatre of human affairs. This was the rise of Mahomet and his *religion*. But here we fix the termination of ancient history, and the commencement of the modern. Previous, however, to our entering upon this second and most important part of our work, we shall consider, with some attention, the *manners, genius, laws, and policy of those Gothic* nations who subverted the Roman empire in the West, and, establishing themselves in every quarter of Europe, are justly considered, at this day, as the parent stock of most of the modern European nations.

CHAPTER VI.

Genius and Character of the Gothic Nations.

The ancient nations of Scandinavia have been compared to an immense tree, full of sap and vigour, which, while its root and stem were fostered in the hardy regions of the North, extended, by degrees, its wide branches over all Europe. To drop the language of metaphor, we know that the present European nations are, in fact, a mixed race, compounded of the *Scandinavians*, who, at different periods, invaded every quarter of this Western continent, and of the nations whom they subdued in their progress. As this is certainly the case, we have little room to doubt that the laws, manners, and customs of the modern nations of Europe are the result of this conjuncture; and that, in so far as these are different from the civil and political usages which prevailed before this intermixture, the difference is to be sought in the original manners and institutions of those Northern nations.

This consideration, as it has led to much research into the history and antiquities of the nations of Scandinavian origin, has opened up to us a variety of curious particulars, of equal importance to the historian and to the philosopher. It will, therefore, be an employment neither unpleasing nor unprofitable, if we attempt to give a

view of the most interesting particulars of the history, manners, and usages of the Scandinavians, such as we have reason to believe them to have been before their intermixture with the nations of the South; and after thus endeavouring to obtain an acquaintance with the original character of this people, I shall consider the change which that character underwent when they became sovereigns of the greatest part of the Roman empire in Europe.

It is very evident, that if we can at all attain to a knowledge of the character of this remarkable people antecedently to their intercourse with the southern kingdoms, it must be from the most ancient chronicles now existing among the present Scandinavian nations. For this source of information is infinitely more to be relied on than the accounts of Roman writers, who, although well qualified to describe them after their migration and establishment in the South, had no knowledge of their character while in their original seats.

The most ancient Scandinavian Chronicles attribute to all the northern European nations an *Asiatic origin*. These Chronicles give strong grounds for conjecturing that the Goths of Scandinavia were a colony of Scythians, from the borders of the Black Sea and the Caspian; that this migration was performed about seventy years before the Christian era—though, according to some authors, not less than one thousand years before this period; and that the Cimbri, the inhabitants of the Chersonesus Cimbrica, or Denmark, were the descendants of the Cimmerian Scythians. All the ancient writers of the North make mention of

an invasion of Scandinavia by a colony of Asiatics; of bloody wars on that account; and of the original inhabitants being expelled, or driven very far to the north, by these invaders. Odin, who afterwards came to be regarded as the chief deity of the Scandinavians, was formerly the principal god of the Scythians who inhabited the country about Mount Taurus.

The Northern Chronicles say that a Scythian prince of the name of *Sigga*, who, according to the custom of his country, was chief-priest of the god, having raised a large band of followers, set out upon a warlike expedition to the north-west of the Black Sea; that, having subdued several of the Sarmatian or Russian tribes, he penetrated into the country of the Saxons, which he conquered and divided among his children. The Icelandic Chronicles record the names of these children; and it is remarkable that, at this day, the sovereign princes of Westphalia, of East Saxony, and of Franconia, pretend to derive their origin from princes bearing these names.

Sigga afterwards entered Scandinavia by the country of Holstein and of Jutland; and, taking possession of the island of Funen, he built there the city of Odenzee, so called after the Scythian god, whose name he from that time assumed to himself, and, dropping his name of Sigga, took that of Odin. Extending his conquests, he made himself master of all Denmark, of which he gave the sovereignty to his son Sciold, who, in the Icelandic Chronicle, stands the first of the princes who took the title of king of Denmark. The same Chronicle informs us that Sigga (now called Odin) continued

his progress, and, entering Sweden, was received by the inhabitants, and even by the prince, with divine honours; that, upon the death of this prince, the Swedes made him offer of the sovereignty; and that, penetrating from thence into Norway, he forced all the Scandinavian princes, one after another, to submit to his authority.

But Odin distinguished himself not only as a conqueror, but as a legislator and consummate politician. Under this character of divinity, while his immense conquests gave credit to his pretensions, he found the imposture highly advantageous in procuring an easy submission to all his laws and regulations. These, if we may believe the ancient chronicles, were extremely wise and salutary, and gave to those barbarous nations a species of civilization to which hitherto they had been entirely strangers. The historical evidence arising from these Scandinavian Chronicles, of an Eastern people migrating to the north-west, and spreading themselves over all the northern kingdoms, is much confirmed when we attend to the perfect coincidence that appears between the manners of the ancient Scandinavians, and those of the ancient Scythians.

The religion of the ancient Scandinavians forms a very curious object of inquiry, and is the more worthy of attention that it was most intimately connected with their manners. Three great moral principles were the foundation of their religion, and influenced their whole conduct. These were, "to serve the Supreme Being with prayer and sacrifice; to do no wrong or unjust actions; and to be valiant and intrepid in fight." These were

the principles of the ancient religion, which, although accompanied by a most wild and extravagant mythology, yet, resting on this pure and simple basis, had a wonderful effect upon the character and manners of the people. Keeping in view these principles, if we peruse the *Edda* or sacred book of the Scandinavians, we shall see, amidst all its absurdities, the traces of a luminous and rational system of religion, which does no dishonour to the people who professed it.

Mallet, who, in his Introduction to the "History of Denmark," has given an abridgment of this sacred book, has clearly shown, that although it contains the substance of a very ancient religion, it is not itself a work of very high antiquity. The Edda, according to his account, was compiled by an Icelandic author a short time after the introduction of Christianity into that island, with the sole purpose of preserving the memory of the ancient poetry of the Scandinavians, which was inseparably connected with the ancient mythology. The compiler, who endeavoured to collect the best specimens of this ancient national poetry, was obliged, in order to render these intelligible, to explain that mythology on which they were founded, and thus, in fact, to unfold the whole doctrines of that ancient religion. Snorro Sturleson, the Icelandic writer who compiled the Edda as it is in its present form, lived in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and was supreme judge of Iceland. The work, besides the specimens of ancient poetry, consists of certain dialogues on the subject of mythology, which proceed on this fiction, that a king of Sweden named Gulphus, being at a loss to

comprehend the origin of those notions of theology which prevailed in his country, and which tradition reported to have been originally derived from the Asiatics, undertook a journey in disguise to Asgard, a city of Asia, in order to be instructed in the genuine principles of that religion. He had several conversations with three princes, or rather priests, who answered all his questions, and fully explained to him the whole of the Celtic mythology. These dialogues compose the greatest part of the Edda; and from them it is easy to deduce a short account of the religion of the Scandinavians.

Odin, as we have before said, was their principal divinity; and it is very remarkable, that to him they attributed every character that could inspire fear and horror, without any mixture of the amiable or merciful. He is called in the Edda, the terrible and severe god, the father of carnage, the avenger, the deity who marks out those who are destined to be slain. This terrible god was held to be the creator and father of the universe. The next in power to Odin, was Friga or Frea, his wife. The god of heaven, says the Edda, united himself with the goddess of the earth; and from this conjunction sprang all the race of subordinate deities. This Frea, or the heavenly mother, came naturally to be considered as the goddess of love and of pleasure.

The third divinity in power and in authority was Thor, the son of Odin and of Frea, who was supposed to partake of the terrible attributes of his father, and was believed to be constantly occupied in warring against Loke, the father of

treachery, and the rest of those giants and evil spirits who envied the power and meditated the destruction of Odin. The Edda enumerates likewise a great train of inferior deities, male and female, among the last of whom are the virgins of the Valhalla or Hall of Odin, whose office was to mark out those whom Odin destines to be slain in battle, and to minister to the deceased heroes in Paradise.

The creation of the world, as described in the Edda, is full of those wild and extravagant ideas which an ignorant and rude people must of necessity form, when left to their own conjectures on matters beyond the reach of human intellect.

I have observed that the religion of the Scandinavians had the greatest influence on their conduct and character. They were convinced that as this world was the work of some superior intelligences, so these presided continually over all nature, which they supposed to be of itself perfectly inanimate, and requiring *constantly* the interposition of Deity to direct and regulate its motions. All the actions of men they believed, therefore, to proceed from this continual interposition of a Deity, without whose aid they could no more move their limbs, or perform any vital function, than a stone could change its place. They therefore believed implicitly in fate or predestination, and in the absolute impossibility of a man's avoiding that course or destiny which was prescribed for him.

But while this was their firm persuasion, they allowed likewise the moral agency of man, and the possibility of his deserving rewards or punishments

for his actions; a difficulty which more enlightened people have long laboured to reconcile. The favourites of Odin were all those who had died a violent death, either by the hand of an enemy, or, what was equally meritorious, by their own. These went, directly after their death, to Valhalla, or the palace of Odin. The wretch who had the pusillanimity to allow himself to be cut off by disease, was unworthy of the favour of the gods, and was doomed to a state of punishment in the next world, and to the perpetual sufferance of anguish, remorse, and famine.

The way in which the departed heroes pass their time in Valhalla, or in the palace of Odin, is described in several places of the Edda. They have every day the pleasure of arming themselves, marshalling themselves in military order, engaging in battle, and being all cut to pieces; but when the stated hour of repast arrives, their bodies are reunited, and they return on horseback safe to the hall of banquet, where they feed heartily on the flesh of a boar, and drink beer out of the skulls of their enemies, till they are in a state of intoxication. Odin sits by himself at a particular table. The heroes are served by the beautiful virgins, named Valkirie, who officiate as their cup-bearers; but the pleasures of love do not enter at all into the joys of this extraordinary Paradise.

These notions of religious belief among the Scandinavians, arising from a native ferocity of character, had a strong effect on their national manners and on the conduct of individuals. Placing their sole delight in war, and in the slaughter of their enemies, they had an absolute

contempt of danger and of bodily pain. It was not enough that they exposed themselves without fear to the greatest perils—they courted death with avidity. Several most remarkable instances of this intrepidity of character we find in the Icelandic Chronicle. Harald with the blue teeth, king of Denmark, who lived about the middle of the tenth century, founded on the coast of Pomerania a city which he named Julin or Jomsburg. He had sent thither a colony of young Danes, under the command of a famous leader named Palnatoko. This man's ambition was to form a nation of heroes. All his institutions tended to instil into his subjects the contempt of life. It was disgraceful for a citizen of Jomsburg to hesitate to engage in an enterprise where the event was inevitably fatal: on the other hand, it was glorious to seek for every opportunity of encountering death.

The Chronicle of Iceland records some instances of this savage heroism which almost exceed belief. In an irruption made by the Jomsburgers into the territories of Haquin, a Norwegian chief, the invaders were defeated, and a few had the misfortune to escape death in the field, and to be taken in arms. They were condemned to be beheaded, and this intelligence was received by them with every demonstration of joy. When the spectators of their fate expressed their astonishment at this conduct, "Why should you wonder," said one, "that I should rejoice to follow where my father is gone before?" Another thus addressed his executioner: "I suffer death," said he, with the highest pleasure: I only request that you will

cut off my head as quickly as possible. We have often disputed," said he, "at Jomsburg, whether life remained for any time after the head was cut off: now I shall decide the question. If any life remains, I shall aim a blow at you with this knife which I hold in my hand. Dispatch," said he, "but don't abuse my hair, for it is very beautiful." Whether these instances are real or fabulous, even the fabrication of such facts by a very ancient author shows that they were consentaneous to the spirit of his country; but, in truth, the manners of other savage tribes who are in a similar state of society, furnish proofs, even at this day, that such a character as that of the Jomsburgers is not out of nature.

Among these nations, this characteristic of an absolute contempt of death was not peculiar to the Jomsburgers: it was common to all the branches of that great parent stock. The poet Lucan has taken notice of this singular feature, and assigns its true cause—the belief of a future state, where rewards were to be bestowed solely on the brave.* To avoid the disgrace of dying a natural death, and thus forfeiting the joys of paradise, the ferocious Scandinavian had often recourse to self-destruction. An Icelandic author mentions a rock in Sweden from which the old men frequently precipitated themselves into the sea, in order that they might go directly to the hall of Odin.

* ——— "Certe populi quos despicit Arctos
Felices errore suo! quos ille timorum
Maximus haud urget lethi metus; inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis, et ignavum est redituræ parcere vitæ."

In the paradise of the Valhalla, the heroes ranked around the table according to the degree of favour they had obtained in the sight of Odin, from the slaughter they had committed on earth. He who had killed, with his own hand, the greatest number of enemies, was seated in the highest place: the heavenly virgins paid him peculiar attention, and most frequently presented to him the enlivening draught from the human skull into which they poured it.

That fine remnant of ancient poetry, which is entitled the "Death-song of King Regner Lodbrog," affords full confirmation of all we have said on this ferocity of character of the Scandinavians. This prince, who was king of Denmark, flourished about the end of the eighth, or beginning of the ninth century. After a life of great military glory, he was at last made prisoner by Ælla, a Northumbrian prince, and condemned to die by the poison of vipers. Lodbrog died with the usual intrepidity of his countrymen. He drowned the acute feelings of his sufferings by singing this chronicle of his exploits, while his attendants, who stood around him, joined at stated intervals in a sort of chorus, "We hewed with our swords." In this death-song, Lodbrog seems to derive the highest pleasure from recounting all the acts of slaughter and carnage that he had committed in his lifetime. These were his only consolation: they were, in his idea, a certain passport to the joys of paradise, and insured for him a distinguished place at the banquet of Odin. After enumerating a series of heroic deeds, but all of a most atrocious and sanguinary nature, he thus

concludes: "What is more beautiful than to see the heroes pushing on through the battle, though fainting with their wounds! What boots it that the timid youth flies from the combat? he shall not escape from misery;—who can avoid the fate which is ordained for him? I did not dream that I should have fallen a sacrifice to Ælla, whose shores I have covered with the heaps of slain. But there is a never-failing consolation for my spirit—the table of Odin is prepared for the brave. There the hero shall know no grief. There we shall quaff the amber liquor from the capacious skulls. I will not tremble when I approach the hall of the god of death. Now the serpents gnaw my vitals; but it is a cordial to my soul that my enemy shall quickly follow me, for my sons will revenge my death. War was my delight from my youth, and from my childhood I was pleased with the bloody spear. No sigh shall disgrace my last moments. The immortals will not disdain to admit me into their presence. Here let me end my song—the heavenly virgins summon me away—the hours of my life are at an end—I exult and smile at death!"

We have given some idea of the religious belief among these nations. It is proper that we should say something of their mode of worship.

Tacitus, in speaking of the religious worship of the ancient Germans, remarks, that they had neither temples nor idols; that they thought it impious to suppose that the Divinity could be contained within the walls of a building raised by man; and that it was degrading to the dignity of the Supreme Being to represent Him in the

human figure.* Such, likewise, were originally the notions of all the Celtic tribes. The open air was the temple of the Divinity; and a forest, or grove of oaks, whose venerable gloom was suited to the solemnity of the occasion, was the place where it was usual to worship by prayer and sacrifice. The altar was composed of one immense stone, or of three placed together, forming a base for one of a larger size laid at top, to serve as a table. A single, a double, and sometimes a triple row of stones, fixed in the ground in a circular form, surrounded the altar. Of these, which are called *Druidical* circles, there are vast numbers to be found through all the northern kingdoms of Europe, and no where more frequently than in Britain.† The most remarkable monument of

* "Cæterum nec cohibere parietibus Deos, neque in ullam humani oris speciem assimilare, ex magnitudine cœlestium arbitrantur."

† There are two of these monuments, of a very large size, near Stromness, in the Orkney Islands, one of a semicircular form, of thirty-two feet radius, consisting of seven stones, from fourteen to eighteen feet in height, and the other a circle of 336 feet in diameter, consisting of sixteen stones, from nine to fourteen feet in height. Round this ditch, at unequal distances from each other, are eight small artificial eminences. The altar stood without the circle, to the south-east. At some distance from the semicircle there is a stone eight feet high, with a round hole or perforation in it; and it is customary at this day, among the country people, when a solemn promise is made (for example, of marriage) for the contracting parties to join their hands through this hole. This is called the promise of Odin, and is held to be particularly inviolable.—*Memoirs of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries*, vol. i. p. 263.

this kind at present existing is that prodigious circle upon Salisbury Plain, which is known by the name of Stonehenge.* In the northern counties of Scotland, we everywhere meet with smaller circles of the same kind, which there seems no reason to doubt were devoted to religious purposes. In these groves, and upon these altars, the Druids offered sacrifices of various kinds, the most acceptable of which were human victims. This was not to be wondered at, considering that it was their opinion, that the supreme Deity placed his chief delight in blood and slaughter. With these barbarous people the number nine was supposed to have something in it of peculiar sanctity. Every ninth month there was a sacrifice offered up to the gods, of nine human victims: and in the first month of every ninth year was held an extraordinary solemnity, which was marked with dreadful slaughter. Dithmar, an historian of the eleventh century, has the following passage: "There is," says he, "in Zeeland, a place named Lederun, where every ninth year, in the month of January, the Danes assemble in great multitudes; and upon that occasion they sacrifice ninety-nine

* Stonehenge consists of two concentric circles, of which the outer is 180 feet in diameter. The upright stones of which these circles are composed, are placed at the distance of three and a half feet from each other, and joined two and two at the top by stones laid across, with tenons fitted to the mortises in the uprights, for keeping the transverse stones in their place. The size of these stones is various, from four to seven yards in height, and generally of the breadth of two yards, and thickness of one. The walk between the circles is three hundred feet in circumference.

men, and the same number of horses, dogs, and cocks, in the firm assurance of thus obtaining the favour and protection of their gods."

The victims, upon those occasions, were commonly captives taken in war; and such were the honours paid to them, and the flattering prospects set before them by the Druids, of the great rewards awaiting them in a future state, that these deluded creatures went exulting to the altar, esteeming it the highest honour to be thus peculiarly set apart for the service of the great *Odin*. Lucan, in the third book of his "Pharsalia," has a very fine passage, in which he has touched several of the most striking peculiarities of the druidical superstition—a passage in which there is a wonderful assemblage of those circumstances which strike the mind with horror.

"There is," says he, "without the walls of Marseilles a sacred grove, which had never been touched by axe since the creation. The trees of it grew so thick, and were so interwoven, that they suffered not the rays of the sun to pierce through their branches; but a dreary damp and perfect darkness reigned through the place. Neither nymphs nor sylvan gods could inhabit this recess, it being destined for the most inhuman mysteries. There was nothing to be seen there but a multitude of altars, upon which they sacrificed human victims, whose blood dyed the trees with horrid crimson. If ancient tradition may be credited, no bird ever perched upon their boughs, no beast ever trod under them, no wind ever blew through them, nor thunderbolt did ever touch them. These tall oaks, as well as the black water that winds in

different channels through the place, fill the mind with dread and horror. The figures of the god of the grove are a kind of rude and shapeless trunks, covered over with a dismal yellow moss. It is the genius of the Gauls," continues he, "thus to reverence gods of whom they know not the figure; and their ignorance of the *object of their worship* increases their veneration.* There is a report that this grove is often shaken and strangely agitated; and that dreadful sounds are heard from its deep recesses; that the trees, if destroyed or thrown down, arise again of themselves; that the forest is sometimes seen to be on fire, without being consumed, and that the oaks are twined about with monstrous serpents. The Gauls dare not live in it, from the awe of the divinity that inhabits it, and to whom they entirely abandon it. Only at noon and at midnight a priest goes trembling into it, to celebrate its dreadful mysteries; and is in continual fear lest the deity to whom it is consecrated should appear to him."

From this description, we may perceive with what artful policy the Druids had heightened the sanctity of their own character, by concealing the mysteries of their worship, and pervading the minds of the people with the deepest awe and reverence for every thing that regarded that reli-

* Similar to this is the fine expression of Tacitus, in describing the secret worship of the goddess Hertha, or Earth, by the Angles and some other of the Germanic nations: "Arcanus hinc terror, sanctaque ignorantia, quid sit Illud quod tantum perituri vident."—TACIT. *de Mor. Germ.* cap. 40.

gion of which they were the guardians. No vulgar step durst enter the sacred grove, and the priest himself feigned to approach it with fear and trembling. It was by these arts that the Druids, as all historians agree, had an influence and ascendancy over the minds of the people, far exceeding that of the priests under any other system of Pagan worship. Armed with this influence, they did not confine themselves to the duties of the priesthood, but exercised, in fact, many of the most important offices of the civil magistrate.* And so very powerful was the hold which this order of men had upon the minds of the people, that it became a necessary policy with the Romans to depart in this instance from their accustomed spirit of toleration; since they found it impossible to preserve their conquest over any of the nations of Celtic origin, till they had utterly exterminated the Druids, and abolished every vestige of that potent superstition. This was the policy of the Romans in Gaul, as well as in Britain; and in those provinces it was successful. But, in the meantime, the Hydra, wounded in one quarter, was daily increasing in the strength and vigour of its principal members; and the primitive tribes of Scandinavia amply revenged the injuries of their brethren of Gaul and of Britain.

Thus, from the preceding review of the principal features which composed the character of the ancient nations from whose blood we are sprung, it

* This Tacitus plainly informs us of: "Cæterum neque animadvertere neque vincire, neque verberare quidem, nisi sacerdotibus permissum, non quasi in pœnam nec ducis jussu, sed velut Deo imperante."

may be inferred, that nature, education, and prevailing habits, all concurred to form them for an intrepid and conquering people. Their bodily frame, invigorated by the climate in which they inhabited—inured from infancy to dangers and to difficulties—war their constant occupation—believing in a fixed and inevitable destiny—and taught by their religion that an heroic sacrifice of life was a certain assurance of the enjoyment of eternal happiness;—how could a race of men, under these circumstances, fail to be the conquerors of the world?

In this short dissertation on the manners of the North, I have endeavoured to give some idea of the original character and genius of those branches of that great family, which were destined to overrun and subdue the fairest regions of Europe. It remains now to exhibit this people in a different point of view, and to mark the character which they assumed in their new establishments. Vulgar prejudice has long annexed the idea of barbarian to the name of Goth, and it has been rashly and erroneously imagined, that the same rudeness and ferocity of manners which it is acknowledged distinguished these northern heroes in their native seats, attended their successors while settled in the polished provinces of the Roman empire. We shall see them, on the contrary, when sovereigns of imperial Rome, superior in many respects to their immediate predecessors, and aspiring at a character of refinement, moderation, and humanity, which would have done no dishonour to the better times and more fortunate periods of that declining state.

CHAPTER VII.

Character of the Gothic Nations after the Conquest of Italy.

It has been usual to consider the Gothic nations as a savage and barbarous race, pouring down from the inclement and uncultivated regions of the north, marking their course with bloodshed and devastation, and, like hungry wolves, falling upon the provinces of the empire, and involving all in undistinguished ruin. It is certainly not surprising that the name of Goth should to the ears of the moderns convey the idea of ferocity and barbarism, when we find popular writers, and those even of no limited degree of information, promoting this false and erroneous opinion, by holding forth a few instances of brutality and ignorance among some of the princes of the Gothic nations, as characteristic of the manners and genius of the whole. Voltaire, in his "Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations," (chap. xvii.), after recapitulating some examples of the cruelty of Clovis and his successors in the monarchy of the Franks (and, among the rest, the monstrous fiction of the atrocious murders said to be committed by queen Brunehilda,) concludes with this observation, that besides the foundation of some religious houses, there is no trace remaining of those frightful ages but a confused tradition of misery and devastation:—
"Il ne reste de monumens de ces âges affreux

que des fondations de monastères et un confus souvenir de misère et de brigandage. Figurez-vous des déserts, où les loups, les tigres, et les renards égorgent un bétail épars et timide ; c'est le portrait de l'Europe pendant tant de siècles." That this portrait of Europe, as M. Voltaire terms it, was a very false and exaggerated one, we shall now procced to show.

What were the manners of those Gothic nations before they left their seats in the north, we have already seen, and must acknowledge that, at this period, their character, if not marked by absolute barbarism, was at least distinguished by a most sanguinary and ferocious spirit. This, however, is not absolutely inconsistent with a species of humanity, and is frequently allied to great generosity of mind. Though bloody and implacable in war, they were not strangers to the virtues of peace; hospitality and kindness to strangers, which are the common virtues of rude nations, they possessed in a high degree. The respect, likewise, which the Scandinavians entertained for the female sex was a striking feature in their character, and could not fail, in many respects, to humanize their dispositions.

The Goths, in their progress southwards, subduing nations more refined than themselves, would naturally make proportional advances in civilization ; and therefore it is not surprising that, by the time they had attained a footing in the empire, we find them in many respects a humane, and even a cultivated and enlightened people. Before their settlement in the Roman provinces, they had laid aside their idolatrous superstitions for the

Christian religion. To their notions of morality, we have the most honourable testimonies from various authors. Grotius, in his preface to his publication of Procopius and Jornandes, has collected many of these testimonies. Salvianus, the Bishop of Marseilles, who lived about the middle of the fifth century, has drawn a parallel between the manners of the Romans and those nations whom they still affected to term barbarous—which is as much to the honour of the latter, as it is to the disgrace of the former. "Omnes fere barbari," says he, "qui modo sunt unius gentis ac regis se mutuò amant; omnes pæne Romani se mutuò persequuntur. Vastantur pauperes, viduæ gemunt, orphani proculcantur; in tantum, ut multi eorum et non obscuris natalibus editi et liberaliter instituti, ad hostes fugiant—quærentes scilicet apud barbaros Romanam humanitatem, quia apud Romanos barbaram immanitatem ferre non possunt."*

From this honourable character as a nation, from their integrity, love of justice, and good faith, "we may remark," says Grotius, "that in the whole course of those wars carried on in Italy under the generals of Justinian, no province or district ever voluntarily departed from their allegiance to the Gothic government." In fact, it is not possible to produce a more beautiful picture of an excellent

* "The barbarians, if of the same nation and under the same sovereign, entertain for each other the most kindly feelings of regard. The Romans as universally persecute each other; so much so, that many of them, and these of no low degree, fly for protection to the enemy; exposed to barbarian cruelty among the Romans, they seek Roman hospitality from the barbarians."

administration than that of the Gothic monarchy under Theodoric the Great, in Italy. Of this the letters of Cassiodorus, his secretary, a man of eminent learning and abilities, give a very complete idea. We find in these the political constitutions of a prince who seems to have continually employed his thoughts on what might equally aggrandize his empire and promote the happiness of his subjects. It is a high pleasure to set in a conspicuous light the almost forgotten merits of one of the most illustrious characters that ever adorned the annals of history; I shall therefore, while on this subject of the genius and character of the Gothic nations, throw together some particulars descriptive of the excellent administration of this truly great and excellent monarch.*

In a former chapter we have seen Theodoric derive his right to the kingdom of Italy from the gift of the emperor Zeno, after he had subdued the country. He was received by the Romans with the submission due to a conqueror, which his humane policy soon changed into the affection due to a native prince. Where laws and customs were good, he attempted no innovations; he retained the Roman laws, the Roman magistrates, the same internal police, and the same distribution of the provinces. The Goths, as conquerors, were naturally entitled to the chief military honours and commands; but the Romans alone were preferred to all civil employments. He seems from

* A very curious picture of the ordinary mode of life of Theodoric is contained in an epistle of Sidonius Apollinaris (l. i., ep. 2,) of which Mr. Gibbon, in the 36th chapter of his History, has given an elegant translation.

the first to have adopted the spirit of a Roman, in the most enthusiastic regard for every remain of the ancient grandeur of the empire. Instead of that savage spirit which pleases itself often in effacing those remnants of antiquity, which are too strong a contrast to modern barbarism, it was the regret of Theodoric to find such noble works in ruins—his highest pleasure to preserve and to imitate them.*

As Theodoric made no alteration in the laws, superior magistrates, or forms of government, so he contented himself with the same tributes and taxes which had been levied by the emperors. These, however, he collected in the manner the least possibly oppressive; and he was ever ready to abate, and even remit them entirely, on occasions of public scarcity or calamity. Of this humane indulgence we have many beautiful instances. He remitted to the inhabitants of Campania the taxes of a year, in consideration of what they had suffered from an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. In his letter on that occasion to the governor of Campania, he tells him that the inhabitants of the province had petitioned him for relief; that to grant their request he wished only to be rightly informed of the extent of their sufferings; he required him, therefore, to send some person of character and integrity into the territory of Nola and Naples, to view the lands, that he might proportion his relief to their misfortunes. The citizens of Naples, in gratitude for their sove-

* Acerbum nimis est (Theod. loq.) nostrum temporibus antiquorum facta decrescere qui ornatum urbium quotidie desideramus augere.—CASS. *Var.* Q. 35.

reign's benevolence, erected in the forum his statue, in mosaic work—a specimen of art which attracted the admiration of all Italy. In the same humane and liberal spirit he exempted the inhabitants of Lipontum, in Apulia, from all taxes for the space of two years, in consideration of their lands being laid waste by the Vandals, in a descent from the coast of Africa. It was a maxim of his, which he often exemplified: "Sola virtus est misericordia, cui omnes virtutes cedere honorabiliter non recusant." (Cass. Var. Q. 9.) A most beautiful instance of his clemency—nay, something beyond it—is preserved in one of his letters to the Roman senate. Liberius had been an active minister under Odoacer, whom Theodoric had stripped of the kingdom of Italy. Theodoric acquainted the senate, by letter, that he had bestowed rewards and honours on Liberius and on his son, for the very reason that *he* had meritoriously and faithfully served Odoacer, though his enemy; that to him whom fortune had now made his sovereign he had not fled as a base refugee, nor courted his favour by vilifying his former master.*

One of the first actions which signalized the reign of this illustrious prince is an example

* "Et ideo," says he, "sic factum est ut ei libenter daremus præmium quia nostrum fideliter juvabat inimicum." In another of the letters of Theodoric to the senate he has these fine expressions: "Benigni principis est non tam delicta velle punire, quam tollere, ne aut acriter vindicando, æstimetur nimius, aut leviter agendo putetur improvidus. At vos quos semper gravitas decet, nolite truculenter insequi inania verba populorum. Quid enim discrepit a peccante, qui se per excessum nititur vindicare?"

equally of the most judicious policy and of singular humanity. In the reign of Odoacer, in a predatory expedition of the Burgundians, under Gondebald, into Italy, the whole province of Liguria was desolated, and a great number of the inhabitants carried into captivity. Theodoric undertook to repair this misfortune; he sent Epiphanius, a bishop of great eloquence as well as sanctity of character, to Lyons, which was the court of Gondebald, with an offer of ransom from Theodoric for all the Ligurian captives. The Burgundian prince, won by the eloquence of the prelate, to emulate the generosity of his brother sovereign, gratuitously discharged all who had not been taken in arms, and required for the rest a very moderate ransom. The return of these captives, to the amount of many thousands, in Italy, exhibited a spectacle which drew tears from the eyes of all the beholders, and contributed equally (as Muratori remarks) to the glory of religion, and to the honour of that humane prince by whose means so unexpected a blessing was derived to his subjects. The religion of Theodoric (as that of all the Gothic nations, after their conversion from idolatry) was Arianism, or that system which professes the unity of the Godhead, and holds the Son only to be the first and most excellent of created beings, whom God has chosen to be his instrument in the redemption of mankind; a doctrine which is commonly supposed to have been first openly professed and vindicated by Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, in the fourth century. It was, however, condemned by the council of Nice, summoned by Constantine the Great; and,

as the Gothic nations paid no regard to this ecclesiastical decree, but adhered to those opinions which their own bishops had taught them, they were treated by the catholics as little better than heathens. Even the excellent Theodoric has been loaded with calumnies by some of the most bigoted fathers of the church, while those of a more truly Christian spirit have done ample justice to his merits. Partial as he was to the tenets of Arius, yet, after his establishment in Italy, he attempted no reformation of the prevailing religion of the country. The catholics were not only unmolested in the exercise of their religion, but, by the excellent ecclesiastical regulations for the maintenance of peace and good order, and by the care shown in the appointment of prelates of known probity of character, it is acknowledged by the catholics themselves, that at no period did the church enjoy greater harmony or prosperity. The humane toleration of Theodoric extended not only to different sects of Christians, but even to those who, as inveterate enemies of the Christian faith, are generally regarded with a degree of abhorrence. The synagogue of the Jews at Genoa had fallen to ruin; Theodoric allowed them to rebuild it. "Religionen," says he, "imperare non possumus; quia nemo cogitur ut credat invitus." This truly laudable spirit of toleration was common, as Grotius remarks, to all the Gothic nations.

Such was the character of Theodoric the Great, a prince whom it is certainly no exaggeration to term, in the words of Sidonius Apollinaris, "Romanæ decus columenque gentis." It may, perhaps,

be remarked, that one extraordinary example of this kind, which might have arisen in any age or nation, is not sufficient to warrant any general inference with regard to the manners of a whole people; and, had this example been singular in the annals of the Gothic nations in Europe, we must have admitted the force of the objection. It was not, however, singular, as may be proved by the example of many of the Gothic princes, whose characters, if not attaining on all points to the striking eminence of Theodoric, were yet such as justly entitle them to the admiration and respect of posterity. I shall instance Alaric, Amalasonta, the daughter of Theodoric, and Totila. We have seen, in the course of our historical detail, the progress of the conquests of Alaric upon the Western empire, and the perfidious conduct of Honorius, who, under the direction of his ministers Stilicho and Olympius, compelled the generous Goth to extremities. In revenge of their repeated acts of treachery and perjury, wearied out at length, and highly exasperated by their perfidy, Alaric revenged himself by the sack of Rome, which he had twice before spared on the faith of a treaty which Honorius had violated. Yet such was the humanity of this barbarian captain, that he gave the most express orders for restraining all effusion of blood, unless in case of obstinate resistance. He particularly enjoined that the churches should be held as an inviolable asylum for all who fled thither for shelter, and that the treasures and jewels which they contained (strong temptations to armed troops in the tumult of victory!) should not be touched under the severest penalties. His

orders were religiously obeyed; and so remarkable was the moderation and singular clemency of this Gothic and heretic conqueror, that the catholic fathers themselves have transmitted to posterity the most honourable testimonies of his virtues.

Amalasonta, the daughter of Theodoric, governed Italy during the minority of her son Athalaric. Such was the political wisdom, the equity and lenity of her administration, that the loss of Theodoric, beloved, or rather adored, as he was by his subjects, was scarcely felt. By the counsels and under the direction of his excellent minister, Cassiodorus, she pursued the same plan of government, directing, at the same time, her utmost attention to the proper education of her son, whom she wished to train up in every great and useful accomplishment. The passion of this princess for the cultivation of literature was so strong, as to draw upon her the reproach of some of the more illiterate of her subjects, who blamed her, in the education of her son, for bestowing more attention on the study of letters than on martial and athletic exercises. But she rightly conceived that the ferocious spirit of the times required rather to be softened than fostered and encouraged.

We have seen the conduct of Totila when, like Alaric, twice master of Rome (which he won by force of arms, after an obstinate resistance,) he imitated the conduct of that conqueror, not only in his clemency to the vanquished, and in his care to preserve the city from destruction, but even in rebuilding, with the utmost magnificence, what, in the fury of a siege, it had proved impossible to preserve from violence. On his first taking

possession of the city, he assembled the senate, and, with great eloquence, recapitulating the favours they had received from the Gothic sovereigns, Theodoric and Amalasonta, and contrasting their mild and equitable administration with the severities they had experienced under the emperors and their officers, he bitterly reproached them with their base servility as well as ingratitude to their benefactors. Being now, however, master of Italy, the Romans experienced under his government every happiness which a nation can derive from the virtues of a prince. "Habitavit cum Romanis," says Paulus Diaconus, a cotemporary author, "tanquam pater cum filiis." He restored the senate to rank and splendour. He adorned the city with many costly structures, made the most salutary regulations for its being constantly supplied with provisions, regulated the rates at which they were to be sold, and gratified the Romans by restoring the ancient Circensian games, which he exhibited with a magnificence rivalling that of the most illustrious of the emperors: in fine, he made the Gothic government as respectable as it had been under Theodoric; so that with truth it might be said of the administration of those princes, that they made good the promise of that great man upon his accession to the throne of Italy:—"that the only regret of the people would be not to have come at an earlier period under the sway of the Goths."

The stream of Gothic inundation, in its first irruption upon the provinces of the empire, had divided itself into two great branches, upon the death of Hermaneric. One branch of the nation,

remaining in Pannonia, and choosing for themselves a chief or king, were termed Ostrogoths, in opposition to the other branch, which, choosing a different sovereign, separated themselves and migrated to the westward, whence they were termed Westrogoths or Visigoths. These last, under Alaric, after some successful inroads upon the exterior provinces, we have seen, penetrated into Italy, and, carrying every thing before them, were for some time masters of the capital of the Western empire. Upon the death of Alaric, Italy was for a while free from the dominion of the Goths, till the period when Theodoric the Ostrogoth acquired a gift of the sovereignty from Zeno, in reward of his delivering that kingdom from the usurpation of Odoacer and the Heruli. The Western or Visigoths in the meantime, after the death of Alaric, had withdrawn into Gaul. Honorius assigned to them the province of Aquitaine, and their prince Ataulphus fixed his residence at Thoulouse, which continued for some time to be the capital of the empire of the Visigoths, till Clovis and his Franks, from zeal to the catholic religion and detestation of the heretical opinions of these Arians, drove them out of Gaul; when they took their way across the Pyrenees, and, settling in Spain, made Toledo the capital of their kingdom. The race of the Visigoth princes in Spain was termed the race of the *Balti*, as that of the Ostrogoths was the *Amali*—ancient names of the chiefs, or heads of the two distinct families from which these sovereigns were descended. It was remarkable that the Ostrogoth princes of the race of the Amali—for instance, Theodoric, Amalasonta, and Totila—had a predi-

lection for the Roman laws, and enforced the universal observance of them in their dominions; while the Visigoth princes, of the race of the Balti, almost all of them rejected the Roman jurisprudence, and adhered to a code of their own, formed from the ancient laws and customs of the Gothic nations. The reason, I apprehend, was this. The Ostrogoth princes, taking possession of Italy, not as invaders, but rather as recovering it from the usurpation of the Heruli, and holding it as a gift from the lawful proprietors, the emperors of the East, were received by the Italians as friends, protectors, and lawful sovereigns. They found there an excellent system of laws, and a people living under them disposed to every duty of allegiance. To have changed these laws would have been the height of imprudence. The Visigoths, on the contrary, wherever they came, were invaders. They had often laid waste the provinces of the empire, and particularly Italy, by their incursions; they were regarded as enemies by the Romans, and both nations looked upon each other with an eye of jealousy. It would therefore have been extremely unnatural in them to have adopted the laws of a people with whom they were constantly at variance; they therefore kept to their own laws and ancient usages, which, as soon as they had obtained a fixed residence, it was the care of their sovereigns to compile and digest into a regular code. It is therefore from this collection of the laws of the Visigoths that we may naturally expect to derive the most certain information that we can now attain of the genius and spirit of this ancient people. In the preface to these laws of the Visi-

goths, we are informed that they were first begun to be digested into a code by king Evaricus or Euric, who reigned about the year 470 of the Christian era. They were corrected and augmented by Leovigildus, who died in 586, and enlarged likewise by some succeeding monarchs, the last of whom was Ervigius, who died in 687. Thus, the first formation of this code of the laws of the Visigoths was prior, by fifty years, to the date of the compilation of the pandects or digests of the Roman laws made by the command of Justinian, who, it is not improbable, adopted from this code of the barbarians the idea of collecting the substance of that immense mass of the Roman laws into one body, which we are informed, before his time, lay scattered in two thousand volumes.

The learned and ingenious author of the "History of Charles the Fifth" has, in his preliminary discourse, in treating of the pernicious consequences of the feudal system, certainly greatly overcharged the picture, when he represents the state of the Gothic governments to be a scene of tumult and dissension, where there was no common or connecting interest to promote a tranquil and regular administration. That this was not the case, these Gothic laws afford the fullest proof; for, it is impossible that such laws should have been the fruit of dissension, or of an impotent administration. That historian indeed tells us that these laws fell soon into disuse, and that customs vague and capricious were substituted in their place. But that this was not the case among the Visigoths, at least till the Saracen invasion of Spain, I believe is incontrovertible; and that they never were in oblivion is

evident from this fact, that the *Forum Judicum* or *Fuero Juzgo*, which is acknowledged to be the fountain of the Spanish law, is in reality, at this day, in great part composed of these ancient laws of the Visigoths. From this code (of the Leges Visigothorum,) which is extremely worthy of the perusal both of the lawyer and the student of history, I shall make a short abstract of a few of the statutes, which will fully evince what the reader may already be disposed to believe, that these nations, at the period of which we now treat, were in a state of society very remote from barbarism; perhaps even further advanced in civilization and refinement than any cotemporary people of the west of Europe.

In order that all judges might have a certain fixed and immutable rule, ascertaining the extent of their jurisdiction, it is declared by these laws, that no judge shall presume to decide in any law-suit unless he finds in this book a statute precisely applicable to it. Such causes as fell not under any of those statutes are declared to be reserved for the jurisdiction of the prince. (Lib. ii., tit. i. l. xii.)

Although there seems to reign in many of the penal laws of the Visigoths a considerable degree of severity, it is tempered at the same time with great equity. One excellent law, which was applicable to all prosecutions for crimes, was that which limited the punishment of all offences to the offender himself, without affecting his children or his heirs. While the Roman emperors were enacting such sanguinary statutes as that of Arcadius and Honorius, which declare that the

children of those convicted of treason shall be perpetually infamous, incapable of all inheritance, of all office or employment; that they shall languish in want and misery, "so that life shall be to them a burthen, and death a comfort"—while such was the spirit of the laws of the enlightened Romans, let us remark the complexion of those of the barbarian Goths: "Omnia crimina suos sequantur auctores. Nec pater pro filio, nec filius pro patre, nec uxor pro marito, nec maritus pro uxore, nec frater pro fratre, nec vicinus pro vicino, nec propinquus pro propinquuo, ullam calamitatem pertimescat. Sed ille *solus* judicetur culpabilis qui culpanda commiserit, et crimen cum illo qui *fecerit moriatur:* nec successores aut hæredes, pro factis parentum, ullum periculum pertimescant."* (Lib. vi., tit. i., l. viii.) It were to the honour of us moderns, that the penal laws of the most civilized nations in Europe were dictated in the same spirit of humanity.

The laws against murder were uncommonly rigid. If the friends of the deceased neglected to prosecute for the crime, any other person whatever might bring the murderer to justice. (Lib. vi., tit. i., l. xv.) If a man, by pure accident, should put another to death, he was guilty of no crime; yet, if intending but the smallest injury to another, such as a blow with the hand

* "Let all crimes be visited on the perpetrator alone. Let no father for a son, nor son for a father, no husband for a wife, or wife for a husband, &c., dread any responsibility. Let the crime die with him who has committed it, and let not the heir dread any danger from the deeds of his predecessor."

or foot, he should accidentally put him to death, he was guilty of homicide. (Lib. vi. Ibid.) If a man, aiming a blow at one person, should kill another; if the murderer began the quarrel, he was punished with death. If it was begun by the person at whom the blow was aimed, that person paid a heavy fine to the relations of the deceased —100 solidi of gold—and the murderer half the sum. (Ibid. l. iv.) It was death to give a woman drugs to procure abortion, and equally criminal if that effect should follow from a stroke or any wilful injury. Child-murder was punished with the death of the parent. (Lib. vi., tit. iii.) If a master, even upon the highest provocation, should put his slave to death, he was fined in a pound of gold, became perpetually infamous, and was deprived of the power of making a testament. (Lib. vi., t. v., l. xii.) If a master maimed his servant of a hand, foot, ear, nose, lip, or eye, he was condemned to three years' banishment from the province in which he resided. (Lib. vi., tit. v., l. xiii.) The *lex talionis* was in great observance among the Gothic nations. The Visigoth code provides, that for every offence for which there is not a special statutory punishment, the *pœna talionis* should take place. It was a very ample extension of this retaliation, that he who wilfully set fire to a house was burnt himself. If a judge, corrupted by bribery, condemned an innocent man to punishment, he suffered the like punishment himself.

It is remarkable that we find in these laws of the Visigoths no traces of those singular and barbarous modes of trial, which were in use among most of the other Gothic nations, even at a period

posterior, by several ages, to the code of which we now treat. I mean what was termed the judgment of God—the trial of crimes by judicial combat between the accuser and accused, and the ordeal or trial by fire and water. These customs, we know, continued long to prevail among the Franks and Normans; but there is no evidence that they were ever in use either among the Visigoths or Ostrogoths; I therefore omit any further mention of them in this place, but shall take particular notice of them in treating afterwards of the European manners in the age of Charlemagne. It is asserted by Montesquieu, in his "Spirit of Laws," b. xxviii., l. ii., that the distinguishing character of these laws of the barbarous nations was, that they were not confined to a certain district; but that in every Gothic nation it was usual to apply that law which was peculiar to the country of the litigants. The Frank, says he, was tried by the law of the Franks; the Aleman by the law of the Alemans; the Burgundian by that of the Burgundians; the Roman by the Roman law; and he seeks for some ingenious reasons to account for this peculiarity, which reasons he finds in the manners of the German nations as described by Cæsar and Tacitus, of their living in distinct provinces, free and independent of each other, united only when there was a common enemy, but each retaining their own established laws and customs. This certainly held true with regard to some of those tribes which Montesquieu has enumerated, but is not true with regard to all the Gothic nations. The Visigoths, of whose laws we have been treating, are a direct proof of

the contrary. So far from allowing those of different nations who were under the monarchy of the Visigoths to be judged by the laws of the country to which by birth they belonged, a Frank by the law of the Franks, and a Roman by that of the Romans, these laws expressly declare that in their dominions no other code shall have the smallest force, but that of the Visigoths. They observe, with regard to the laws of other nations, that, though abundantly eloquent, they are involved in perplexities,* and a penalty of thirty pounds of gold is imposed on any person who shall cite in judgment any code of laws belonging to other nations. (Lib. x. Ibid.)

In treating of the laws of the Gothic nations, I have taken this example of the laws of the Visigoths, not from any opinion of their superior excellence to those of the other nations whom we, after the example of the Romans, have chosen to term barbarous. By any person who attentively examines the laws of the other Gothic nations, the laws of the Visigoths will not be found by any means to merit a superior regard. Montesquieu even affects to depreciate them as often vague and declamatory—a censure which will, in particular instances, apply to every compilation of the laws of different monarchs. But judicious and respectable as we have seen them to be, they must, in point of more extended policy, yield to the laws of the Franks and of the Lombards. Of the excellence of the former, M. Montesquieu has collected

* Quamvis eloquiis polleant, tamen difficultatibus hærent. Ideo nolumus sive Romanis legibus, sive alienis institutionibus amplius convexari.—Lib. ii., tit. i., l. ix.

some striking proofs in the 28th book of his "Spirit of Laws;" and whoever wishes to see a very judicious estimate of the merits of the latter, viz., the laws of the Lombards, may find it in the Fifth book of Giannoni's "History of Naples."

The government of the Goths, as we find them after their settlement in the provinces of the empire, was monarchical. This form had its rise, as it has in all barbarous nations, from the choice of a military chief to command them in their expeditions. The throne, among the Goths, continued to be elective long after they had obtained fixed settlements. It was natural, when time had rooted them in their possessions, that a sort of mixed elective and hereditary monarchy should take place. The powerful lords and barons would not easily part with their right of election, but the choice would come to be confined to the family of the last sovereign, or he, upon his death-bed, with the advice of these lords, would nominate his successor. Such, in fact, we find to have been the case both in the kingdom of the Ostrogoths and Visigoths. The choice did not necessarily fall upon the eldest son; brothers, and even bastards, were frequently called to the throne. Torrismond, the Visigoth, was succeeded by his brother, Theodoric II. Alaric II., the Visigoth, who was killed by Clovis, the king of the Franks, left a legitimate son, Amalaric; he was, however, succeeded by his bastard son, Gesalaric, upon whose death Amalaric came to the throne. These facts prove two things; first, that the throne was elective, and secondly, that the election was confined to the family, though not limited to the eldest child, or

even to legitimate children. Upon the failure of the blood royal, the election was free.

The chief officers in the administration of the Gothic government were the dukes and counts. These officers, we have seen, were known in the Roman empire before the time of Constantine. The former were the highest in military command, and the latter the first among the civil dignities. The duke, as his name imported, *dux exercitus*, was the commander-in-chief of the troops of the province over which he presided. There is, however, reason to believe that his office was not confined to a military command alone. He even appears to have had sometimes the supreme civil as well as military government in the province. Pantinus, in his treatise on the Gothic dignities, gives an instance, from which it appears that even the higher clergy were subject to his jurisdiction.

As the office of the duke was, however, chiefly confined to military affairs, that of the *comes*, or count, was principally exercised in the civil. He was the highest civil judge in the province, with power of reviewing the decrees of all inferior jurisdictions. He had the power of suspending from office and punishing his subordinate judges for negligence or misdemeanour. In the absence of the count from the town or district where he presided, he named a *præpositus* or *vicarius*, to decide in ordinary matters, but with instruction to report to him all cases of difficulty. As the office of the duke infringed sometimes on that of the count in his civil power, so did that of the count upon the duke's in military: for it appears that, on sudden emergencies, the *comes* could summon out all the

military force. This was probably when, from the distance of the residence of the duke from the extremities of the provinces, or his being engaged in the exercise of his duty in a remote quarter, there was a necessity for another to act in his place. In general, however, the office of count was that of the supreme civil judge, and that of the duke the chief military dignity; at least, it appears to have been such in Italy under the Ostrogoth princes.

The Gothic government seems, then, upon the whole, to have been an absolute monarchy, of a mixed hereditary and elective nature. The nobles, it is plain, if they did not determine the succession of the crown, at least ratified it. Of this convocation of the *proceres*, for that purpose, we have frequent mention in the Gothic historians. These proceres were probably the body of the dukes and counts. The monarch, once elected, was absolute in the most ample sense. We do not find any laws limiting or even prescribing his powers; and it is certain that the nomination of all dignities, offices, and magistracies, was in the sovereign. He imposed tributes and taxes at his discretion; and could condemn capitally without form of trial. Of this we have a strong instance in Theodoric the Great, which is the only stain upon his memory—the condemnation of the philosopher Boetius and the senator Symmachus, on slight suspicions of treasonable designs—a procedure which only an absolute and despotic power in the sovereign could have warranted.

Here we close our review of what may properly be called *Ancient History*.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

ARABIA—Ancient Manners and Religion—Rise of Mahomet—His Doctrines—Conquests—Death—Causes which contributed to the rapid Progress of his Religion—Conquests of the Successors of Mahomet—Change in the National Character after the Removal of the Seat of Empire to Bagdat—Learning of the Arabians.

AT the period of the extinction of the Roman power in the West, the Eastern empire was in a state of weakness, apparently fast verging to a fate similar to that which the Western had undergone; but its catastrophe was not yet at hand, and was to come from a different quarter. A small spark of superstition kindling, in the meantime, in the heart of Arabia, produced a new religion, and a new empire which arose to a very high degree of splendour. To that quarter, therefore, we now turn our attention, to mark the rise of the Mahometan superstition, and the foundation of the empire of the Saracens.

Arabia is a large peninsula, divided in the middle by the tropic of Cancer. It is bounded on the north by Syria and Palestine; on the South, by the Indian Ocean; on the east, by the Gulfs of Bassora and Ormuz; and on the west by the Red Sea, which separates it from Egypt. It is divided into three parts: Arabia Petræa, which,

as its name implies, is a barren and rocky country, bordering on the Red Sea; Arabia Deserta, so named from the sandy deserts with which it abounds, is adjacent to the Gulf of Ormuz; and Arabia Felix, a comparatively fertile and delightful clime, forms the southern part of the peninsula.

Before the period of which we now treat, the Arabians had lived, chiefly, in independent tribes, and were almost unknown to other nations. The inhabitants of the interior part of the country were mostly shepherds; and those of the coasts and frontiers, pirates and plunderers. They lived in tents, and occasionally migrated from one country to another, without laws, or any established police, and acknowledging no superior but the head of their tribe. Their manners are described as being, beyond measure, barbarous; their religion an incoherent assemblage of all the superstitions with which the neighbouring countries abounded. They had a confused tradition, that they were descended from the Patriarch Abraham; and they retained, of the Jewish religion, the ceremony of circumcision, ablutions, and the horror for certain meats, which they regarded as unclean. With these rites, they combined the worship of idols, and the belief of three goddesses of equal power and wisdom, and co-existent with the Supreme Being.

The city of Mecca was the residence of the chief of these idols. A small square edifice, or temple, called the Cāābba, was held throughout all Arabia to be a place of the most supreme sanctity. Within this temple was a stone, which was the peculiar object of veneration, and was said to have

descended from heaven, in those days of innocence when man was free from guilt as he came from the hands of his Creator. The stone was then white, but gradually became sullied, as man became more wicked, till at last it grew entirely black. From the pilgrimages which it was customary to make to this temple, and the riches it brought thither, Mecca became the most considerable city of Arabia.

The wandering tribes had a sort of rank, or settled pre-eminence among themselves, though we know of no head whom they all obeyed. One of the principal of these tribes was that of Koreish; yet it does not appear to have been remarkably flourishing at the time of the appearance of Mahomet; for he, though a prince of that race, was born to no ampler inheritance than an Æthiopian slave and five camels.

This extraordinary person was born in the year 571 of the Christian era.* His father died before his birth, his mother when he was but a few years old; and his relations put him into the service of a woman of the name of Cadigha, who traded into Syria. In his intercourse with this country he had opportunities of observing the manners of a nation more polished than his own, and felt the defects of his own education, for as yet he could neither read nor write. Syria was at this time a Roman province. He was struck with the manners

* The precise era of his birth has been much disputed, and has been fixed, by different authors, at various periods, from the year 560 to the year 620 of the Christian era. The date given in the text is that now most commonly adopted.

of the people, their laws, their government, and policy. His mind was of that reflecting turn which profits by every observation. It is probable that in this country, where he found a mixture of Jews and Christians, his thoughts first turned upon religion; and finding that the gross superstition and idolatry of his own country offered ample room for a reformation, which presented the most flattering objects to an ambitious mind, he began to conceive the project of establishing a new religion. Christianity presented a system of the most beautiful morality; but the religious notions of his countrymen inclining to Judaism, he thought it advisable to retain some great features likewise of that ceremonial, as well as certain idle customs and ceremonies to which the Arabians had long been addicted; such as the pilgrimage to the temple of Mecca, and the adoration of the black stone. His most politic idea was the thought of attracting proselytes to his new religion, by accommodating it, as much as possible, to the voluptuous spirit of his countrymen. But as yet the whole system was, probably, only a dream, which the poverty and obscurity of its author could give him very little prospect of ever realizing.

Mahomet, however, was fortunate enough to insinuate himself into the good graces of his mistress, Cadigha, and, marrying her, he saw himself raised to a situation which made him one of the most considerable men of his country. Instead of abandoning his former project, he considered his new situation as only a stronger incentive to the prosecution of his plan, which his influence and fortune promised materially to

facilitate. He began, therefore, to put his scheme in practice. He endeavoured to remedy the defects of his education, by acquiring some knowledge of letters. He affected a solitary life; bestowed a great deal in charity; retired, at times, to the desert, and pretended that he held conferences with the angel Gabriel. The epilepsy, a disease to which he was subject, was, he pretended, a divine ecstacy, or rapture, in which he was admitted to the contemplation of Paradise. He made his wife an accomplice in the cheat, and she published his visions and reveries to all the neighbourhood. In a short time the whole city of Mecca talked of nothing but Mahomet. He began to harangue in public; and his natural eloquence, which was wonderfully animated, joined with a noble, commanding, and majestic figure, gained him many proselytes.

This was the substance of the religion which he held forth as a new revelation.* He taught that mankind should acknowledge one God, without division of substance, or of persons: an eternal and all-powerful being, Creator of the universe; —That the laws of this being, whose beneficence is equal to his power, are such as tend universally to the happiness of his creatures;—That the duty which man owes to God is to pray seven times a day; to honour him by such ceremonies as are figurative of his bounties; to love all mankind, as members of one family; to assist the poor and protect the injured; and to show kindness even to inferior animals. To these precepts, which it

* See Sale's Koran, Preliminary Discourse, Section 4th.

must be owned are excellent, Mahomet joined others which recommended his doctrine to the passions of his followers. He was himself of an amorous and voluptuous constitution. The pleasures of love were, by the religion of Mahomet, held forth as a duty in this life, and the highest reward for the good Mussulman in a future state. He permitted his followers to have four wives, and as many slaves for their concubines as they pleased. He himself, as a prophet, arrogated a superior privilege, and had fifteen wives.

He taught, that God Almighty had engraven these laws in the hearts of the first race of men; but that vice and iniquity gradually prevailing, and wearing out their impression, he had sent, from time to time, his prophets upon earth, to revive his holy precepts by their doctrines and example. The most eminent of these prophets, he affirmed, were Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ —and Mahomet—the last, the greatest of all—who was destined to extend the knowledge of the true religion over all the earth.

The ceremonies of circumcision, ablution, and the pilgrimage to Mecca, he recommended as exterior and visible signs, by which God desired that man should signify his belief of the more speculative tenets of his religion. These laws he pretended to have received from God Almighty, by the hands of the angel Gabriel—who presented him, from time to time, with parcels of that book, or Koran, in which they were contained. The fundamental doctrines of the Koran are such as have been enumerated. They are, it is true, intermixed with a variety of absurdities—errors in

history, chronology, and philosophy; but these the countrymen of Mahomet, in his time, may well be supposed to have overlooked; and the learned Mussulman, at this day, will probably consider them as corruptions and interpolations of the original text. It must be acknowledged, that the work itself is full of fine conceptions, and abounds with that brilliant and figurative eloquence which is characteristic of oriental writing. In many places, when the majesty and attributes of God are described, the style is most sublime and magnificent, and nearly resembles that of the Sacred Scriptures—from which, indeed, it is quite obvious that the composer of the Koran drew many of its most shining ornaments.

The illiterate character and ignorance of Mahomet, in his younger days, leaves no doubt that, in the composition of this work, he must have had able assistants; but as he was possessed of strong natural talents, and a brilliant imagination, the chief merit was, in all probability, his own. The production of the work in small and detached parcels was a highly politic measure; for by leaving it in his power to add to it from time to time, according as he was favoured with new revelations, he had it in his power to remove or explain any errors or inconsistencies, the detection of which might otherwise have been fatal to his imposture.

The disciples of Mahomet daily increased, and among these were the most respectable of the citizens of Meeca. Tumults, however, arising, and frequent disputes between the believers and infidels, the magistrates of the city thought it

necessary to remove the cause of the disorder, and Mahomet was banished. His flight, which was termed the Hegira, was the era of his glory; his disciples followed him, and he now became sensible of his own strength. He began from that moment to be fired with the ideas of conquest; he betook himself to Medina, and there, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, he preached to his votaries—empire and dominion in this world, and eternal happiness in the next. He now determined to take vengeance on the people of Mecca, for their blind ingratitude to the prophet of God; and, marching against them, as it is said, with only 113 men, he attacked and took the city. Omar, one of the bravest of the Arabians, had joined him at Medina. His followers, after this first success, which was regarded as miraculous, increased prodigiously. In a few years, he had subdued to his empire and religion all Arabia. With a mixture of strange presumption and enthusiasm, he now wrote to Cosrhoes, king of Persia, and others of the neighbouring princes, that they should embrace his religion; and, what is yet more surprising, two of these princes actually became Mahometans. He now turned his arms against the Eastern empire, and, marching into Syria, took several of the towns belonging to the Romans; but in the middle of his conquests, Mahomet, at the age of 63, was seized with a mortal disease, the effect, it was said, of poison. The conclusion of his life was admirable. Let him, said he, to whom I have done violence or injustice, now appear, and I am ready to make him reparation. For several days preceding his

death, he ordered himself to be carried to the mosque, and there harangued the people with wonderful eloquence, which, from a dying man, had a powerful effect. It is by no means improbable that he believed himself inspired—as the singular success of all his enterprises might have persuaded a mind of that enthusiastic turn, of a divine interposition in his favour. It is certain, that with his latest breath he continued to inculcate the doctrines of his new religion. He recommended to his followers to keep the sword unsheathed till they had driven all infidels out of Arabia; and in the agonies of death, he declared to Ayesha, the best beloved of his wives, that God, by the mouth of the angel Gabriel, had given him the choice of life or death, and that he had preferred the latter.

The rapid success which attended the propagation of the religion of Mahomet may be accounted for from a few natural and simple causes. The first of these was certainly that signal favour which attended his arms, and, as we shall immediately see, those of his successors. The martial spirit, when inflamed by the enthusiasm of religion, is irresistible; and while repeated victories persuaded many of a divine interposition in favour of the prophet and his law, the terror of his arms inclined others submissively to receive that religion which was propagated by the sword. Neither was it surprising that a religion which adapted itself so entirely to the passions of men should find a number of willing votaries among the luxurious nations of the East. The gross ignorance, too, of many of those nations might readily have

rendered them the dupes of a less artful system of imposture than the fable of Mahomet; and, to add to all, it must be owned with regret, that the shameful animosities and dissensions which then prevailed among the different sects of the Christian church had too much contributed to bring the true religion into disesteem and contempt.

Mahomet, by his last will, had nominated Ali, his son-in-law, and Fatima, his daughter, to succeed him; but Abubeker, his father-in-law, had the address to secure the soldiery: he pretended a prior nomination, and bringing Ayesha and Omar over to his interest, he secured the succession.

As disputes began to arise among the believers, Abubeker collected and published the scattered books of the Koran, which, it is probable, had never till that time been united; and, prosecuting the conquests of Mahomet, he made an inroad into Palestine, defeated the army of Heraclius, the emperor, and took Jerusalem, subjecting the whole country between Mount Libanus and the Mediterranean. Abubeker died in the midst of his conquests, and Omar, by the unanimous voice of the army, was called to the throne. He prosecuted the conquests of his predecessors, and in one campaign deprived the Romans of Syria, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea; then turning his arms against Persia, this rapid conqueror, in the space of two years, brought that immense and magnificent empire under the dominion of the Saracens,* and extinguished the ancient religion

* The Arabians, who were, in fact, Ishmaelites, or descendants of Abraham by his concubine Hagar, are supposed to have assumed the name of Saracens, to induce the

of Zoroaster, of which no trace remains, but what is preserved by the inconsiderable sect of the Guebres. In the mcantime, the lieutenants of Omar were extending the conquests of the Saracens in other quarters: they subdued all Egypt, Libya, and Numidia. In this conquest was burnt the celebrated library founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus, and augmented by succeeding princes. The Saracens argued that all the knowledge which was there treasured up was either contained in the Koran, and therefore superflous—or not contained in it, and therefore unnecessary to salvation.

Amid these extensive conquests, Omar was killed by a Persian slave. His successor, Otman, followed the steps of his predecessors, and added to the dominion of the caliphs Bactriana and part of Tartary; while one of his lieutenants ravaged the islands of the Archipelago, took Rhodes, where he destroyed the celebrated Colossus, and, passing into Sicily, threw consternation into the heart of the Italian states. Otman was succeeded by Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet. This prince, whose name is to this day revered by the Mahometans, inherited, in many respects, the genius of his father-in-law; but he was cut off by treason in the midst of his conquests, after a reign of four or five years. He transferred the seat of the caliphs from Mecca to a city called Couffa, on the banks of the Euphrates; from whence it was afterwards removed to Bagdad.

The genius of the Arabians, fired by enthusiasm

belief of their being the legitimate descendants of Abraham by Sarah his wife.—HOWEL, part iii. chap. iii.

and invigorated by conquest, seemed now in the train of carrying every thing before it. It is wonderful what may be achieved by a people who are once in the track of glory. Nations, in fact, seem to have their ages of brilliancy, when all is life, and vigour, and enterprise; and these, perhaps preceded, and again to be followed by, an era of inanimation, weakness, and degeneracy.

In this splendid period of the history of the Saracens, their conquests were incredible. Within half a century from the first opening of the career of Mahomet, they had raised an empire more extensive than what remained, at this time, of the dominion of the Romans.

There was a succession of nineteen caliphs of the race of Omar, or, as they are termed, the Ommiades; after which began the dynasty of the Abassidæ, who were descended directly, by the male line, from Mahomet. Almanzor, the second caliph of this race, changed the seat of the Saracen empire to Bagdad; and from that period the Mahometans assumed a character to which they had hitherto been strangers. Almanzor had genius and taste for literary pursuits; the sciences began to be cultivated at Bagdad; and the learning of the Romans was transplanted thither from Constantinople. The philosophers and *literati* of the East flocked to that capital, where their talents attracted both respect and reward. The successors of Almanzor, educated in the school of the sciences, showed them the same favourable attention; and under Haroun Alraschid, who was himself a most accomplished literary character, learning, and all the arts of utility, as well as ele-

gance, rose to a pitch of splendour which they had not known since the reign of Augustus. Alraschid flourished in the middle of the ninth century, and was cotemporary with Charlemagne.

The sciences for which the Arabians were most distinguished at this time were medicine and astronomy. They had made no inconsiderable progress in mechanics! geometry they had brought to a very considerable height; and they were, if not the inventors of Algebra, the first who adopted that science from the farther East. Their poetry was singularly beautiful: they added a regularity to the oriental verse, retaining at the same time all its luxuriant imagery. Haroun Alraschid himself composed very beautiful verses.

The manners of the Arabians in this period of the splendour of their empire are better learnt from some of their romantic compositions, than from any accounts of historians. That book which is familiar to every one, "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," is not only a most pleasing composition in point of imagination, but contains, as an orignal work, a genuine picture of oriental manners, and conveys very high ideas of the police and splendour of the empire of the caliphs, in the time of Alraschid.

CHAPTER II.

MONARCHY OF THE FRANKS.

Uncertainty of the early History of the Franks—Merovingian Period—Mayors of the Palace—Change in the Dynasty effected by Pepin—Manners and Customs—Form of Government and Laws of the Franks—Feudal System.

LEAVING at present the history of the Eastern nations, we turn our view to the Western part of Europe, to take a short survey of the origin of the monarchy of the Franks, who, in the course of a few ages, raised, on the ruins of the Roman power, a great and flourishing empire. The rise of a new dominion is also, at the same period, to be traced in Italy:—the church, which had hitherto been confined to an authority in spiritual matters, exalting herself into a temporal sovereignty, and, under the title of a charter from Heaven, arrogating a supreme control over all the princes of the earth.

The history of the origin of the Franks is in no degree more certain than that of any of the other barbarous nations who overran the Western empire. The most probable opinion is, that they were, originally, those tribes of German nations, inhabiting the districts that lie on the Lower Rhine and the Weser, who in the time of Tacitus passed under the names of Chauci, Cherusci, Catti,

Sicambri. These, and some other petty nations around them, forming a league for mutual defence against the Roman power, termed themselves Franks, or Freemen.*

The first who is mentioned in history as the sovereign of this united people is Pharamond, and he seems to possess but a doubtful or legendary existence.† His successor and kinsman Merovius, who is the head of the first race of the French monarchs known by the name of the Merovingian, is a personage whose history is fully as doubtful as that of his predecessors. His grandson was the famous Clovis, who succeeded to the monarchy of the Franks in the year 482. He was a prince of intrepid spirit, who, from the beginning of his reign, and while yet in the twentieth year of his age, projected the conquest of all Gaul.

The Romans at this time maintained a very feeble authority in that country; and Syagrius, governor of the province, was quite unable to make head against this enterprising prince. The conquest was soon achieved.‡ Clovis next threw his eyes upon the kingdom of Burgundy. Gondebald had usurped the throne of Burgundy, by the murder of his father Chilperic. Clovis married Clotilda, the daughter of Chilperic, and, on pretence of avenging his murder, dethroned Gondebald, but allowed him afterwards to hold his dominions as his ally and tributary.

* Gibbon, vol. i. c. x. Howell, part iii. book ii. c. 5.

† Mezeray has, notwithstanding, bestowed four books of his great History of France on the establishment of the Franks in Gaul, preceding the reign of Pharamond.

‡ Gibbon, c. 38.

Clotilda had great influence over her husband. The Franks had not yet embraced the Christian religion, but adhered to their ancient idolatry. Clotilda converted Clovis ;* in all probability, by persuading him that this measure was the most effectual means of conciliating the affection of all the Gallic nations. Clovis, accordingly, was baptized, and most of the Franks followed his example.†

The politic and ambitious genius of Clovis derived from his conversion to Christianity a new pretext for extending his empire. The Visigoths, who, as has already been observed, were all of the Arian persuasion, possessed Languedoc and Aquitaine. Clovis now pretended that his conscience would not allow him to rest while a nation of heretics remained in any part of Gaul. With the assistance of his tributary, Gondebald, he immediately invaded the territory of the Visigoths, and in a short time deprived them of their whole dominions. The Visigoths retired into Spain, and made Toledo the seat of their kingdom. Theodoric the Great, who had been prevented from affording aid to his Gothic brethren, by a war in which he was then engaged with the emperor Anastasius,

* Mezeray, tom. i. p. 320. Gibbon, vol. vi. c. 28.

† The generous enthusiasm and barbarian magnanimity of Clovis is well characterized by the following anecdote. Soon after his conversion, while he was hearing a sermon, preached by the Bishop of Rheims, in which the preacher gave an impassioned description of the sufferings and death of Christ, Clovis suddenly started up in the assembly, and, seizing his spear, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Would to God that I had been there with my valiant Franks, I would soon have redressed his wrongs!"—*Fredegarii Epitome*, cap. 21.

was resolved as soon as possible to avenge their quarrel. He hastened across the Alps into Aquitaine, and there, in a decisive engagement near the city of Arles, he entirely defeated and dispersed the armies of Clovis and Gondebald; and retook from them the whole territory of the Visigoths, which he added to his own dominions. This was the period of the glory of Clovis. He died soon after, in the 511th year of the Christian era.*

France, which during the reign of Clovis had become an extensive and powerful monarchy, was in a short time thrown back into a state of weakness and division, almost equal to that from which it had so recently emerged.

Clovis left four sons, who divided the monarchy among them, and were continually at war with each other. Their short and distracted reigns, the mischiefs arising from a divided empire, the miserable anarchy which prevailed through every part of the kingdom, and the deplorable weakness of the whole of the princes of the Merovingian race, render the history of France, at this period, a most disgusting as well as uninstructive picture; nor is it till the rise of the *Maires du Palais*, when a degree of order arose under the usurpation of those officers, that the transactions of those dark ages become at all interesting. On the death of Dagobert the First, who left two infant sons, Sigibert and Clovis the Second, the government fell into the hands of their chief officers, the Majores

* The name Clovis, which is the same as Louis, is variously given by different ancient authors; we find it Chlodovæus, Hludowicus, Chlodvig, Ludvich, &c.—Howel, part iii. chap. i. sect. 3.

Palatii, or Mayors of the Palace. These officers founded a new power, which, for some generations, held the French monarchs in the most absolute subjection, and left them little else than the name of king.

The proper kingdom of the Franks was at this time divided into two distinct provinces, of which the line of separation ran from north to south. The eastern part was called Austrasia; the western, Neustria. Pepin, surnamed Heristel, Mayor of the Palace, and governor of Austrasia, made war against the impotent monarch of Neustria, drove him into Paris, took the city, and thus became master of the whole kingdom. He was generous enough to spare the life of his sovereign. He allowed him the rents of some inconsiderable territories, and continued himself to govern France, with admirable wisdom and moderation, during a period of twenty-seven years. He never affected the title of King, but contented himself with that of Duke of Austrasia, and Mayor of the Palace of Neustria. The only weak and impolitic action of his life was the last, the appointment of his infant grandson Theobald to succeed him in his dignities, while at the same time he left a son Charles, surnamed Martel, in every respect worthy of those honours, and capable of asserting and vindicating with spirit what he might, with justice, esteem his right.

Austrasia declared for Charles, who immediately assumed the title of Duke, to which, as by hereditary right, he added that of Mayor of the Palace. The young Chilperic, the nominal monarch, had a degree of spirit beyond that of his predecessors,

and endeavoured to emancipate himself from that bondage to which they had patiently submitted. He treated the mayor of the palace as a rebel and usurper, and sought by force of arms to reduce him to subjection. A civil war took place, which ended fatally for Chilperic. Charles Martel was victorious, but allowed the monarch to retain, like his ancestors, the royal name and insignia, while he himself possessed the whole power and authority. Charles Martel governed France for about thirty years, with great wisdom, spirit, and ability. He was victorious over all his intestine foes; he kept in awe the neighbouring nations; he delivered his country from the ravages of the Saracens, whom he entirely defeated between Tours and Poictiers—thus averting the imminent danger of Mahometanism overspreading Western Europe; and he died honoured and lamented, bequeathing, in presence of his officers, the kingdom of France, as an undisputed inheritance, to his two sons, Pepin and Carloman.

Charles Martel had now assumed the name of king. His sons at first followed their father's example, and were styled, like him, dukes and mayors of the palace, the one of Austrasia, the other of Neustria, and Burgundy; Childeric III., a son of the last nominal prince, being permitted, in the mean time, to hold the insignia of royalty. But Carloman, the younger son of Charles, inspired with a devout apathy for the empty honours of this world, thought proper to retire into a cloister; and Pepin, the elder, now possessed of the entire administration, determined to assume the name, as he possessed the power of king.

The means which Pepin adopted to secure to himself an undivided sovereignty are characteristic of the spirit of the times. He could have deposed his weak and nominal sovereign, and put him to death. His power was equal to any attempt, of which the measures he followed afford, perhaps, a stronger proof than if he had resorted to force to compass his ends. He sent an embassy to Rome, to Zachary the pope, proposing it as a question to his holiness, whether he, or Childeric, had the best title to the throne. Zachary had formed the scheme of erecting a temporal dominion in Italy, and wished, for that purpose, to employ the arms of France to wrest the kingdom from the Lombards. An opportunity now offered of securing the friendship of Pepin, which the designing pontiff, on due consideration of its advantages, scrupled not to embrace. He decided the question by declaring that it was conducive to the honour of God, and the interests of the church, that Pepin, who already exercised the office of king, should possess the title also. Thus have the holy fathers often chosen to veil their schemes of avarice or ambition, confounding their own temporal views with the sacred interests of religion.

The kings of the Franks had hitherto been inaugurated by a ceremony peculiar to the Gothic nation. Seated on a shield, they were carried through the ranks and received the homage of the army. Pepin, aware of the violence he had done to human institutions, was anxious to impress the belief that his right to the crown was of heavenly origin. He adopted from Scripture the ceremony of consecration by holy oil, and was anointed by

the hands of Boniface, archbishop of Mentz;* and this ceremony became ever after an established usage in the coronation of Christian princes. The church, for very obvious reasons, annexed to this ceremony a very high degree of importance. The hierarchy thus assumed a supremacy over temporal governments; and hence, in after times, has the Head of the Church arrogated to himself the right of disposing of kingdoms, as an inherent branch of his spiritual sovereignty and jurisdiction.

The first or Merovingian race of kings thus came to an end in the person of Childeric III., who, with an infant son, was conducted to the monastery of St. Bertin, where they passed the remainder of their days. This dynasty of weak and insignificant princes had filled the throne of France for three hundred and thirty-four years.† There reigned at Paris alone twenty-one princes of this race; but including the various divisions

* Bonifacius was an Englishman, who, professing no other end than the propagation of Christianity, migrated from his own country into Germany and France, and ingratiated himself so highly with Charles Martel and Pepin, as to regulate all the affairs of the church within their dominions. He founded many bishoprics, and at last fixed his own residence at Mentz, which for many subsequent ages continued the see of the first archbishop of Germany.

† It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of the Merovingian period, and goes far to account for the weakness and misery of the kingdom, that almost all the princes of this race ascended the throne while yet infants. Mezeray, in his "Abrégé Chronologique," has attached to the name of each prince, as it occurs, the age at which he began to reign. Vide p. 323, et seq.

into which the kingdom of the Franks was split, we have to reckon about forty princes of the family of Merovius.

In the person of Pepin, son of Charles Martel, commenced the second, or Carlovingian race of the monarchs of France, perpetuating in their name the illustrious foundation of a family which, to this day, gives princes to a great part of Europe. Pepin prepared to discharge his obligations to the see of Rome, of which he was reminded by a most extraordinary *letter from heaven*, written by pope Stephen III., the successor of Zachary, *in the character of St. Peter!* Urged by this invocation, he passed the Alps, and compelled the king of the Lombards to evacuate the greater part of his territories. His conquests put him in possession of a great part of Italy, and enabled him, as he said, to bestow upon the pope the territories of Ravenna, Bologna, and several other states, the first temporal possessions of the see of Rome. This gift, it must be owned, has been called in question, as the zealous advocates for the temporal sovereignty of the popes maintain that their right, in the Italian territory, was of a much more ancient date; while those who dispute that sovereignty assert that they never had any other title than a gradual usurpation of a temporal interest, from what was originally only a spiritual jurisdiction. What appears most probable is, that Pepin actually made gifts to the see of Rome of some of those territories from which he expelled the Lombards, to be held by the church as a patrimony, but of which he himself meant to retain, or whenever it should suit him, to assume the sovereignty.

Pepin, with all those precautions to colour his usurpation of the crown of France, endeavoured to establish his security on a more effectual basis, by diligently courting the affection of his subjects. From the beginning of the French monarchy the supreme legislative power was understood to reside in the general assemblies of the people, called the *Champs de Mars*. When the feudal system became prevalent, a great weight of authority was added to the nobles from their beneficia, or fiefs, which, in a short time, inclined the government to a sort of aristocracy. The kings, as we have seen, became absolute ciphers. Pepin, however, when he ascended the throne, changed entirely the face of affairs; yet as it would have been dangerous, with his defective title, to have exasperated the nobles, by encroaching greatly on those powers to which they had been accustomed, he very politically consulted them in all matters of importance. When on his death-bed, he summoned a general council of the grandees, and asked their consent to a division of his kingdom between his sons Charles and Carloman; which was, in fact, an acknowledgment of a right in the nobility of the kingdom to dispose of the crown. Pepin died at the age of fifty-three, having reigned sixteen years from his coronation, and having governed France for twenty-seven years from the death of his father Charles Martel.

The manners of the Franks during this period of their history form an interesting subject of inquiry. It is natural to believe that, at this remote period, slight diversities only would prevail between the manners of neighbouring tribes; and

the accounts which Tacitus has given of the habits, customs, and laws of the ancient Germans, may be considered as the best record we possess of the manners of the ancient Franks. Every man was a soldier, because the tribe was constantly in a state of war. The kings, who commanded these tribes, had a very limited authority. In all matters of consequence, the business was deliberated in the assembly; that is to say, in the camp. The government, in short, was democratical.

From the time of the establishment of the Franks in Gaul, we find the most evident traces of the same constitution. The king had no legislative authority, and a very limited judicative power. All right of legislation resided in the general assembly of the people, called the Champs de Mars, from being held annually on the first day of March. In these assemblies, the king had no more than a single suffrage, equally with the meanest soldier; and it was only when actually in the field, or when it was necessary to enforce military discipline, that he ventured to exercise any thing like authority. This is strongly exemplified in a story which is recorded of Clovis I. After the battle of Soissons, a large vessel of silver was part of the booty; Clovius, being informed that it had been carried off from the church of Rheims, asked permission of the army to take it, that he might restore it to the church. A soldier, standing by, struck the vessel with his battle-axe, and with great rudeness desired the king to rest satisfied with the share that should fall to his lot. Clovis durst not, at the time, resent this inso-

lence, for all were then upon an equal footing; but he knew the privilege which he had when military discipline was to be enforced, and took advantage of it; for, some time afterwards, observing the same soldier to be negligent in the care of his arms, he called him out of his rank, and, charging him with his offence, cut him down with his battle-axe.* There was not a murmur heard, for Clovis had not exceeded the limits of his authority.

This story conveys a very distinct idea of the degree of power possessed by the first kings among the Franks. The people knew no subordination but a military one. In every other respect they held themselves to be on a footing of equality and independence.

After the establishment of the Franks in Gaul, things necessarily altered, by degrees, from the new situation in which they were placed. The Gauls, the conquered people, were exposed to all the brutality of their conquerors; they were treated in every respect as slaves: of this the Salic laws, the most ancient code existing among the Franks, furnish a strong proof. The murderer of a Frank paid 200 solidi, while the murderer of a Gaul paid only 100. The Gauls, notwithstanding these degrading distinctions, preserved a part of their possessions, because their conquerors found more than they had occasion for. They even, at first, enjoyed their lands without

* "Coup bien hardi," says Mezeray, "et qui le fit extrêmement redouter des François."—Tom. i. p. 311. Gibbon (c. 38) alludes to this singular and characteristic story, but does not tell it.

paying any taxes; but were subjected, in common with the Franks, to the obligation of making war at their own charge, and of furnishing lodging and conveyance to officers travelling on the service of the state.

Clovis allowed the Gauls to retain their own laws; either from policy, or because he could not give them a new code. As these laws were unknown to the Franks, it was, of consequence, also necessary that the Gauls should choose their own judges.

The Franks, on the other hand, were governed by the Salic and Ripuarian laws, distinctions of the different tribes or nations of Franks before they left Germany. Nothing can convey a stronger picture of the detached and independent character which these tribes still maintained after their settlement in Gaul, and their union under one prince, than their retaining their different codes of laws. It is true that these laws were new-modelled, in many respects, by Clovis, and by succeeding sovereigns; for, being framed while these German nations were heathens and idolaters, it was necessary to adapt them to the spirit of Christianity.

This diversity of laws among the Gauls and the different tribes of Franks was attended with much inconvenience; and numberless disadvantages, arising from this source, were felt in the civil policy of France down to the revolutionary period at the close of the eighteenth century. The manners of the Gauls, which, under the Roman governors, had attained a high degree of polish, were entirely opposite to the rude barbarity of their conquerors.

To form a code of laws which would have united both nations was an absolute impossibility: there arose, therefore, as necessary a distinction of laws as of manners; and even when time had nearly annihilated the latter distinction, it was not to be expected that the laws should approach to any common standard, for those derived, on the other hand, additional force from the operation of the same cause, and the revolution of time only riveted their observance.

The ancient Germans had the highest veneration for their priests. It was, therefore, natural for the Franks, after their conversion, to preserve the same reverence for the ministers of their new religion. We find that the bishops held the first place in the national assemblies. They were employed under Clotarius I. to correct the Salic and Ripuarian laws, and they had a sort of superintendence over the judicial tribunals. In the absence of the king, it was competent to appeal to the bishops from the sentences of the dukes and counts.

The Franks, owing their conversion to Christianity to their recent connexion with the Gauls, very naturally chose their first bishops from that nation. This was an important advantage to the conquered people, for it was most natural that those bishops should employ the influence they obtained from their ecclesiastical functions, as well as the respect which they attracted from their superiority in literature and acquirements, to better the condition of their own countrymen, and to raise them from that state of servility and abasement to which the Franks were at first disposed to confine

them. Such was, in fact, the case; for, in a very few generations, the condition of the Gauls was so much changed, that, provided they chose to live under the Salic and Ripuarian laws, instead of the Roman, they became entitled to all the privileges of the Franks. They had their seat in the Champ de Mars, and their vote in all public deliberations. They seemed even to be regarded with more peculiar favour by the sovereigns, several of whom, from political motives, chose to attach the leading men among the Gauls to their service, by bestowing on them considerable offices of dignity in the state.

The Franks thus incorporated with the Gauls, a new system of policy was visible in this united monarchy, which by degrees pervaded most of the European kingdoms. The rise of this singular fabric, the feudal system, has given occasion to much curious speculation; and, as opinions extremely various and contradictory have been expressed by eminent writers, the subject merits a full investigation.

By the feudal system is properly meant that tenure or condition on which the proprietors of land in most of the countries of Europe for so many ages held their possession; viz. an obligation to perform military service whenever required by the sovereign or the overlord, who originally gave them a grant of that possession.

In the infancy of the Roman state, among other institutions which historians have been fond of attributing to the political sagacity of Romulus, was the connexion between patron and client. Occasions have frequently occurred of remarking

the error of referring to a particular author, whether politician or lawgiver, such institutions as are the natural result of the state of society in which we find them. Of this the *Clientela* and *Jus patronatus* of the Romans is an example. It is evident that this connexion of patron and client is nothing more than a species of the same clanship which subsists in all barbarous nations, where war is the chief occupation; and which naturally continues to subsist, even when the state has acquired that degree of political stability in which war becomes a frequent accident instead of a constant employment. This *Clientela* was strongly in observance among the ancient Gauls, and no less so among their conquerors the Franks, as well as among all the other Germanic nations.

Among the ancient Gauls, all military power being lodged in their chiefs or kings, as their civil, juridical, and ecclesiastical power was monopolized by the Druids, it was customary for the people to devote themselves with the most absolute submission to their chiefs, who formed a barrier for them against the tyranny of the Druids, which was severely felt and complained of. This attachment to the chief they ratified by an oath of allegiance, which bound them to participate his fortune in every thing. Thus Cæsar tells us, that there were few of those men who would not rush on to death when their leader had fallen, and count it the highest dishonour to survive him.

In Gaul, this *Clientela* subsisted not only between the different ranks of persons, but even between cities and provinces, with their inferior districts and villages. These last owed to the

canton, province, or city, the obligation of taking up arms whenever necessity required, in return for the defence and protection afforded them.

In all the feudal governments it was customary for the sovereign, whenever occasion required, to summon his vassals, by public proclamation, to repair to the standard of their lord. In the same manner, we find in ancient Gaul, as described by Cæsar, that, on urgent occasions, a general summons was issued by the chief for all to attend who were capable of bearing arms: and, to enforce the more prompt obedience, it was customary to put to death the man who came last to the assembly.

It is evident that, in this ancient policy of the Gauls, there was a great affinity with the clanship or vassalage in the fiefs or *feus*. Yet it is to be observed, that in this species of clientela we have mentioned as in use both among the Romans and Gauls, we see nothing as yet of an assignment or gift of land, which afterwards in the *feus* became the subject of the contract; and in consideration of which all the services of vassalage were performed. The origin of these, therefore, yet remains to be investigated.

When Rome became subject to the emperors, they established garrisons upon the frontiers, both for keeping the provinces in subjection, and preventing inroads from neighbouring unconquered nations. Thus there were several legions stationed along the Rhine, which was then the boundary between the Gauls and Germany. To conciliate the affections of the soldiery was a very material object with the first emperors; and for this purpose no policy seemed more proper than

to assign to them gifts of portions of land in the provinces where they were stationed. This, we find, was the case even in Italy, as we may learn from the first and ninth eclogues of Virgil.

Of these distributions of land we find frequent mention among the ancient Roman lawyers. They became more frequent among the latter emperors, who found it necessary to court the favour and support of the army, now become the disposers of the imperial diadem. These distributions of land were at first only for life. The first who allowed them to descend to the heirs of the grantees was Alexander Severus, who, as Lampridius informs us, permitted the heirs of the grantees to enjoy their possessions, on the express condition of their following the profession of arms. Constantine the Great in like manner made gifts of land to his principal officers, perpetual and hereditary.

In the decline of the empire there were two classes of soldiers principally distinguished, of whom mention is frequently made by Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius. These were the Gentiles and Scutarii. They were esteemed the flower of the imperial armies, and on them it is probable that the largest benefícia, or gifts of land, would be bestowed; and consequently that these were the *beneficiarii* so frequently mentioned in the Roman authors.

Such, then, we find to have been the state of Gaul at the time of the invasion of the Franks. These conquerors, possessing themselves of a province, which they found in a great measure parcelled out into *benefices* or gifts to the soldiery

who had been its former conquerors, and adopting the very judicious policy of allowing the privileges of Franks to all who chose to live under the Salic and Ripuarian laws, made very little change in the property or possessions of those who chose to conform to that condition. It was only changing the superior or overlord, and exacting from the beneficiaries the same oath of allegiance and military service to their new conquerors which they had sworn to their former superiors, the emperors or governors. The Gentiles and Scutarii now became *gentilshommes* and *ecuyers;* the names by which we know the ancient beneficiaries to have been distinguished in the French monarchy.

This hypothesis appears to afford a solution to all those difficulties which attend the history generally given of the origin of the feudal system. When we examine the accounts given by Pasquier, Mably, Condillac, and Robertson, we find the main difficulty to lie in this circumstance. The beneficia or feus are said, by these authors, to have been granted by the king or chief out of the conquered lands, to his chief captains or officers, as a reward of their services, and a tie to secure their aid and assistance when necessary in military expeditions. Yet it is at the same time allowed, and history will not permit the fact to be controverted, that these chiefs or kings had no land to bestow; for nothing is more certain than that, whatever conquest was made, whatever booty was gained, or lands acquired, the share of the chief was assigned to him by lot as well as that of the private men. Of this the anecdote of

Clovis at the battle of Soissons furnishes a sufficient proof. The abbé Mably, indeed, although he takes notice of this fact, and says at the same time that the first kings among the Franks had nothing to distinguish them from their subjects, unless the privilege of commanding the army, yet, when he comes to account for the origin of the *beneficia*, is forced to give them a portion of land, which he calls their *domaine*, and out of which, he says, they made gifts to such of the grandees as they wanted to secure to their interest. What this *domaine* was, however, he does not attempt to inform us. In fact, we have the best authority to say, that the lands which, during the Merovingian race, belonged to the king in patrimony, were a mere trifle, and could by no means be the subject of those gifts or benefices. Eginhart, in his "Life of Charlemagne," speaking of the successors of Clovis, at the time when the mayors of the palace had begun to assume an ascendant, has these remarkable words:—"Regi, nihil aliud relinquebatur, quam ut, regio tantum nomine contentus, crine profuso, barbâ submissâ, solio resideret, ac speciem dominantis effingeret: cum præter inutile regis nomen, et precarium vitæ stipendium, quod ei præfectus aulæ, prout videbatur, exhibebat, nihil aliud proprii possideret qua unam, et eam perparvi redditus, villam, in quam domum, et ex quâ famulos sibi necessaria ministrantes, atque obsequium exhibentes paucæ numerositatis habebat."*

* "The king had no other marks of royalty than long hair and a long beard. He sat on his throne and mimicked the

This passage gives a very complete idea of what was the extent of the king's domain—at least, at the time when the mayors of the palace came to have authority; and we have no ground from history to presume that, before that period, it had ever been much more extensive. It seems, therefore, in every respect, a reasonable hypothesis, that the *beneficia*, which could not have been created by the kings of the Franks out of their own property, were, in fact, not created by them at all, but subsisted in Gaul at the time of the invasion of the Franks. These conquerors, no doubt, dispossessed many of the Gauls of their lands, but they did not dispossess all. The Salic and Ripuarian laws establish many regulations with regard to the Romans and Gauls who possessed lands, subjecting them to the same burdens as the Franks, of furnishing horses, provisions, and carriages in time of war. The Roman taxes and census being entirely abolished on the coming in of the Franks, the great ease which the Gauls found in being delivered from those burdens, to which their new services were comparatively

airs of a sovereign, but in reality he had nothing else but the name. His revenue, except a small country-seat and a few servants, was no more than the precarious bounty that was allowed him by the mayor of the palace."—EGINHART, *Vit. Car. Magni.*

"The domain of the Frank monarchs became afterwards more extensive, and their residences in different provinces of the kingdom more numerous; but we cannot attach any great ideas of magnificence to these establishments, when we find Charlemagne regulating the number of hens and geese which each is to maintain." — GIBBON, cap. 59, note 88.

light, very soon reconciled them to their new masters, and made them the most faithful of their subjects.

The authors who, according to the common supposition, hold these *beneficia* to have been granted by the kings of France out of their private domain, involve themselves in another difficulty, for which they give but a very lame solution. The king, as may be supposed, being very soon divested of all his property, by the creation of a very few *beneficia*, it remains still to be accounted for, how these feudal tenures came to be universally prevalent, so that the whole property of the kingdom was held in that way: for the fees created out of the domain could be divided only among a small number of the grandees; and the rest of the kingdom would be held as absolute and unlimited property. To account, therefore, for these tenures becoming universal, a very unnatural hypothesis is resorted to. Such of the subjects as held their lands in free property are supposed to have become sensible that it would be more for their advantage to hold them as *beneficia*, and to have surrendered them into the hands of the king, becoming bound to serve him in war, as the condition on which he was to restore them their property. The motive for this extraordinary proceeding is said to have been, that they found it necessary to have a powerful protection in the king or chief. But what protection could this king or chief afford them, who was a man perhaps, poorer than themselves; and who, according to this notion, had no other certain dependence for assistance from his grandees

than from the few to whom he had granted benefices out of his domains? Had not these unlimited proprietors a much more powerful incitement to preserve their independence, which made each a sovereign within his own territory; and were they not better protected by that general equality which subsisted among them, as well as by that natural jealousy, which, being felt alike by *all*, would incite them to combine in preventing any *one* from attempting unjust encroachments?

When we further take into view that these *beneficia* were, originally, only grants for life and held to be revocable, at all times, at the will of the grantor, the supposition of any free and unlimited proprietor surrendering his possessions, to be held by such a tenure, is wholly incredible. The exchange would have been that of liberty for dependence; absolute property for precarious possession.

This power of disposing of the fortunes of their subjects, by the revocation of their benefices, could not long continue under such weak princes as those of the Merovingian race. The more powerful of the beneficiarii soon determined to render their situation more secure. A measure of this kind could not, it may be presumed, have been attempted, if all the beneficiarii had been, as at first, Romans and Gauls; but at this time, by the changes made by the sovereigns, a great part of the benefices must have come into the hands of Franks. These, taking advantage of the weakness of the monarchy, and of the disorders which occupied the kingdom, during the contests be-

tween Gontran and Childebert, determined to seize that opportunity of establishing themselves in their possessions. In a council held to treat of a peace between these princes, the beneficiarii obliged them to consent in a treaty, that the king should no longer be at liberty to revoke benefices once conferred. This innovation, however agreeable to the greater part of the beneficiaries, was a check to the ambition of such men as either had no land, or thought they had too little; and these discontents afforded a pretext to succeeding princes for resuming their power of revocation. The treaty in question, however, was soon after solemnly confirmed in an assembly held at Paris.

Such was the state of the lands in France about the middle of the Merovingian period; part possessed in *beneficia*, or fiefs, which were now become hereditary, and part occupied by allodial, or absolute proprietors, the descendants of those Franks who received shares of land at the conquest. In that state of fluctuation, in which property of the former description remained till it became irrevocable in the manner mentioned, it is easy to perceive that allodial property was a much more valuable possession. Many of the allodial proprietors, during the perpetual civil wars of the Merovingian princes, found means greatly to increase the opulence and the extent of their territories. In those disorders, the castles and places of strength, where the more powerful lords resided, were naturally resorted to by the inhabitants of the territory. They were continually filled with retainers and dependents, who

sought the protection of the lord or seigneur; which being of consequence in securing their possessions from invasion, they courted by making him annual presents, either of money or of the fruits of their lands. This connexion became, in a very short time, that of vassal and superior; a tacit contract, by which the vassal was understood to hold his lands, upon the condition of paying homage to the superior, and military service when required—the symbol of which vassalage was a small annual present.

It was equally natural for the superior or seigneur to acquire a civil and criminal jurisdiction over his vassals. In those disorderly times, the dukes and counts, who were the judges in the provinces and districts, occupied with their own schemes of ambition, paid very little attention to the duties of their office. Many of them made a scandalous traffic of justice, oppressing the poor, and regulating their sentences according to the price paid for them. In this situation, the inferior ranks of the people naturally chose, instead of seeking justice through this corrupt channel, to submit their differences to the arbitration of their seigneurs, to whom they had sworn allegiance. By degrees, the vassals came to acknowledge no other judge than their superior; and, in the territory of these seigneurs, the public magistrates soon ceased to have any kind of jurisdiction.

The seigneurs were now the sole judges, as well as the commanders or military leaders, of all who resided within their territories. Even bishops and abbots who possessed seigneuries exercised these powers, and led their men out to war. The

whole kingdom was now divided between these seigneurs and the *beneficiarii*—that is to say, all lands were held in feu, either of the prince or of subject superiors.

CHAPTER III.

Charlemagne—The new Empire of the West—Manners, Government, and Customs of the Age—Retrospective View of the Affairs of the Church—Arian and Pelagian Heresies—Origin of Monastic Orders—Pillar-Saints—Auricular Confession.

The Merovingian race of the kings of France having come to an end by the usurpation of Pepin, and the deposition of Childeric III., a new series of princes, the descendants of the illustrious Charles Martel, filled the throne of France for a period of 253 years.

The injudicious policy of Pepin in dividing between two ambitious princes, his sons, a kingdom already filled with intestine disorder, must soon have involved France in all the miseries of civil war, had not the fortunate death of Carloman averted this calamity. Charles was now acknowledged monarch of all France; and in the course of a glorious reign of forty-five years, this prince, who, in more respects than as a conqueror, deserved the surname of Great, extended the limits of his empire beyond the Danube, subdued Dacia, Dalmatia, and Istria; conquered, and rendered tributary to his crown, all the barbarous nations as far as the Vistula or Weser; made himself master of the greatest part of Italy, and alarmed

the fears of the empire of the Saracens. The longest of his wars was that with the Saxons. It was thirty years before he reduced to subjection this ferocious and warlike people.

The motive of this obstinate war, on the part of Charlemagne, against a people who possessed nothing alluring to the avarice of a conqueror, was ambition alone; unless we shall suppose that the ardour for making proselytes had its weight with a prince, whose zeal for the propagation of Christianity was a remarkable feature in his character—a zeal, however, which carried him far beyond the bounds which humanity ought to have assigned to it. Charlemagne left the Saxons but the alternative of being baptized or drowned in the Weser. Impartial history records with regret, that this conquest of the Saxons was stained with many instances of sanguinary ferocity on the part of the victor.

But the talents of Charlemagne were yet more distinguished in the civil and political regulation of his empire than in his extensive conquests. It was the misfortune of France, at this period, to be equally oppressed by the nobility and the clergy —two powers equally jealous of each other, and equally ambitious of uncontrolled authority. Pepin, who was an able politician, had endeavoured to mitigate the disorders arising from this source, by the system of parliaments or annual assemblies in the month of May,* to which the bishops and

* The president Henault assigns as the reason for changing the time of meeting from March to May, that cavalry being introduced into the army under Pepin, the former season of assembling was too early to allow them to obtain subsistence for their horses.

abbots, together with the chief of the nobility, were summoned by the sovereign to deliberate on the situation of the state, the necessities of government, and the wants of the people. Charlemagne ordered these assemblies to be held twice in the year, in spring and in autumn. It was the business of the assemblies, in autumn, to deliberate only and examine. The interests of the kingdom relative to foreign princes, the causes of grievances and the sources of abuse, were investigated, and prepared for the consideration of the assembly in spring, the Champs de Mai, which had the sole power of enacting laws. This last assembly was not composed alone of the clergy and grandees. Charlemagne gave the people, likewise, a share in the system of legislation, by admitting from each county twelve deputies or representatives. These, with the nobility and clergy, formed three separate chambers, who each discussed, apart, the affairs which concerned their own order, and afterwards united to communicate their resolutions, or to deliberate on their common interests. The sovereign was never present, unless when called upon to ratify and confirm the decrees of the assembly, or to serve as a mediator, when the different branches could not come to an agreement.

Still further to harmonize the discordant parts of his empire, Charlemagne divided the provinces into different districts, each of which contained several counties. He abolished the ancient custom of governing them by dukes; and in their place he appointed three or four royal envoys, called *Missi Dominici*, to govern each province or *Missaticum*,

obliging them to an exact visitation of it every three months. These envoys held four courts in the year, for the administration of justice; and the arrangement in which the business of these courts was conducted reflects the highest honour on the character of Charlemagne. The causes of the poor were first heard, next those of the king, then the causes of the clergy, and, lastly, those of the people at large. Yearly conventions were also held by the royal envoys, where all the bishops and abbots, the barons and the deputies of the counts were obliged to attend personally, or by their representatives. At these conventions, the particular affairs of the province were treated of, the conduct of the counts and other magistrates examined, and the wants of individuals considered and redressed. At the general assembly or parliament, these envoys made their report to the king, and to the states, of the situation of their district, and thus the public attention was constantly and equally directed to all the parts of the empire. All the ranks of magistrates were kept in their duty by this public and frequent scrutiny into their conduct; and the people, secured from oppression, began to taste the sweets of genuine liberty, in the subjection to equal, wise, and salutary laws.

This propitious change, reflecting the highest honour on the talents and virtues of Charlemagne, was but a temporary blessing to his subjects. His successors had not, like him, the wisdom to perceive that moderation in authority is the surest foundation of the power of a sovereign.

The most important transactions in the reign

of Charlemagne are those which regard Italy. The extirpation of the Lombards, whose dominion had been greatly abridged by his father Pepin, was proposed to Charlemagne by pope Adrian I. The French monarch had formed an alliance with Didier, the last king of the Lombards, and had married his daughter; but the contending interests of the two sovereigns soon interrupted the amity between them. The queen was sent back to her father's court; and Charlemagne, in obedience to the summons of the pope, prepared for the conquest of Italy. He passed the Alps, subdued all Lombardy, forced Didier to surrender himself at discretion, and thus put a final period to the government of the Lombards, which had subsisted above two hundred years.

Charlemagne made his entry into Rome at the festival of Easter, amid the acclamations of the people. He was saluted king of France and of the Lombards; and at this time he is said to have confirmed the donation made to the popes by his father Pepin.

The empire of the East was at this time ruled by the empress Irene. On the death of Constantine surnamed Copronymus, his son Leo Chazares succeeded to the throne. In the first years of his reign he procured his son Constantine, an infant, to be associated with him in the empire; and, dying, left this prince, then nine years old, to the government of his mother Irene, who ruled the empire rather as a sovereign than as a regent. She was an able woman, and foresaw the danger to the empire from the ambition and power of Charlemagne. To avert any hostile purposes, till

she should be in a condition to oppose them with effect, she brought about a negotiation for the marriage of her son with the daughter of Charlemagne: but it was far from her intention that this match should ever be accomplished. Irene, on the contrary, was too fond of power herself to consent to anything that might deprive her of the reins of government. She kept the young Constantine in the most absolute dependence and submission; and when at last he endeavoured to assume that dignity which belonged to him, she, on pretence of treasonable designs, threw him into prison, deprived him of his eyes, and put him to death. She afterwards, with the same insincerity as before, proposed an alliance with Charlemagne herself, and offered him her hand in marriage; but while the negotiation was in progress, a revolution took place in the empire, and the ambitious empress was driven from her throne, and died an exile in the island of Lesbos.

Charlemagne found himself obliged frequently to visit Italy, both to establish his own power in that country, which was endangered by the partisans of the descendants of the Lombard kings, and to defend the authority of the popedom, which was now firmly devoted to his interests. In the last of his expeditions to that country he underwent the ceremony of inaugural consecration by the hands of Leo III., and in the church of St. Peter was solemnly crowned Emperor of the Romans—a title which, three hundred years before, had expired in the person of Augustulus. It is not improbable, that, had Charlemagne chosen Rome for his residence, that great but fallen empire might have

once more revived, perhaps recovered its ancient lustre; if at the same time he had himself abolished, and his successors discontinued, that mischievous policy of the early French monarchs, of dividing their dominions among their children. But Charlemagne had no capital of his empire; his chief residence, indeed, was at Aix-la-Chapelle; but his constant and distant wars allowed him no permanent seat of empire; and he, like his predecessors, divided, even in his lifetime, his dominions among his children.

This great prince was no less respectable in his private than in his public character. He was a man of the most amiable dispositions, and there never was a sovereign to whom his subjects were more attached from considerations of personal regard. His secretary and historian, Eginhart, gives a beautiful picture of his domestic life, and the economy of his family, which is characteristic of an age of great simplicity. He never rode abroad without being attended by his sons and daughters; the former he instructed in all manly exercises, in which he himself was particularly skilled; and his daughters, according to the simple manners of the times, were assiduously employed in the various labours of housewifery, particularly in spinning wool with the distaff. For his children he indulged in all the affection of the fondest parent, and he bore the premature loss of some of them with less magnanimity than might have been expected from so heroic a mind.*

* There are some minds of so malignant a temperament as to derive the highest gratification from the discovering, or, failing discovery, from the invention of materials to degrade

Charlemagne died in the year 814, in the seventy-second year of his age. Cotemporary with him was the illustrious caliph of the Saracens, Haroun Alraschid, whose conquests, excellent policy, wisdom and humanity, entitle him to be ranked among the greatest of princes. He expressed a peculiar admiration for the virtues and character of Charlemagne, and cultivated his friendship by embassies and presents.

Of all the lawful children of Charlemagne, Louis, surnamed the Débonnaire, was the only one who survived him. He succeeded without dispute to the dominions of Charlemagne, with the exception of Italy, which that monarch had settled upon his grandson Bernard, the son of Pepin.

Of the manners, customs, and government of the age of Charlemagne many particulars have been

any character of acknowledged excellence. To Voltaire and Gibbon we willingly consign the merit of those detestable calumnies with which they have endeavoured to reduce the character of Charlemagne to the standard of their own creed. An infamous perversion of the meaning of a single passage in Eginhart's "Life of Charlemagne," has, by these authors, been made the groundwork of a charge of the deepest criminality; and the worthy secretary is thus made to calumniate his master, for whom, in every line, he expresses the utmost esteem and veneration. Sensible of the inconsistency of charging Charlemagne with criminality with his own daughters, (which Eginhart is supposed to have done,) and the fact of the secretary having married one of these princesses, Gibbon disposes of this difficulty by arguing, that the suspicion under which these fair damsels laboured, "without excepting his own wife," disproved the fact of the marriage! How much more natural the conclusion, that the fact of the marriage disproved the suspicion!—See GIBBON, chap. xlix. note 97.

touched upon with much nicety and penetration by Voltaire, in his "Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations." Other particulars, however, appear to demand rather a more minute consideration than that lively and ingenious writer has thought proper to bestow on them.

We have seen in what manner Charlemagne new-modelled the government of the provinces by the excellent system which he introduced into the provincial conventions under the royal envoys.

It does not, however, appear that the ancient chief magistrates, the dukes and counts, lost entirely their authority. They continued to have the military command of the troops of the canton, and the charge of procuring levies from each, according to its strength and the measure of its population. Cavalry came now into general use, but their numbers must have been very inconsiderable, for twelve farms were taxed to furnish only one horseman. The province furnished six months' provisions to its complement of soldiers, and the king provided for them during the remainder of the campaign.

The engines used in the attack and defence of towns were the same that were in use among the Romans; for the Franks had no other masters in fortification than they. The battering-ram, the ballista, the catapulta, and testudo, were accordingly employed in all their sieges.

Charlemagne was very attentive to the increase and management of his navy. To protect his trade, and secure his provinces from invasion, he stationed ships of war in the mouths of all the

large rivers, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. The nobility of his kingdom were obliged to do personal service in his fleets as well as in his armies. He made Boulogne one of the chief stations for his navy, and restored the ancient pharos of that town, which had been destroyed by time. He bestowed the utmost attention on the encouragement of commerce. The merchants of Tuscany and Marseilles traded to Constantinople and Alexandria, and interchanged the commodities of Europe and Asia. He projected, and partly carried into execution, the splendid design of uniting the Rhine and the Danube by a canal, and thus forming a communication between the Western Ocean and the Black Sea. Venice, which, at the time of Attila's depredations in the north of Italy, had arisen from a few inconsiderable huts, where the inhabitants of the country had sheltered themselves from their invaders the Huns, was now a considerable commercial state. Genoa was likewise enterprising and industrious; and the cities of Rome, Ravenna, Milan, Arles, Lyons, and Tours, became noted for the manufacture of woollen stuffs, glass, and iron work; but silk was not yet wove in any city in the Western empire, nor for 400 years afterwards. A taste for the more luxurious articles of Eastern magnificence was repressed by Charlemagne, by sumptuary laws, and still more powerfully restrained by the extreme simplicity of his own manners and dress.*

* "He wore in winter," says Eginhart, "a plain doublet, made of an otter's skin, a woollen tunic fringed with silk, and a blue coat; his hose consisted of transverse bands of different colours."—EGINHART, *Vit. Car. Mag.*

The value of money at this time was nearly the same as in the Roman empire at the time of Constantine. The golden *sous* of the Franks was the *solidus Romanus*, which was worth about twelve shillings and sixpence sterling; the silver *denarius*, worth about fifteen pence. Besides these, which were actual coins, there were other fictitious or numerary denominations of money. The numerary *liber* (livre) of the age of Charlemagne was supposed to be a pound or twelve ounces of silver, which was divided into twenty parts, each of which was a *solidum* or *sous* of silver. The variation of the money of France under the same denominations has from that time to the present been prodigious. The livre, instead of a pound of silver, which was worth about three pounds sterling, is now nearly of the value of tenpence.

The *Capitularia*, or laws of Charlemagne, were compiled and reduced into one volume as early as the year 827. They remained afterwards for many centuries in oblivion; but were at last rescued from obscurity in 1531 and 1545, by the care of some learned men of Germany; and since that time there have been several very elegant editions of them published in France. These capitularies present a variety of incidental circumstances, from which we learn the manners and customs of the times. Unless in the great cities, there were not, in any of the European kingdoms, inns for the accommodation of travellers: they repaired, according to the custom of the times, to any house they chose, and it was reckoned the highest breach of civil and

religious duty to deny accommodation to any traveller.*

The state of the arts and sciences under Charlemagne was very low. The towns were small, thinly scattered, built of wood, and perhaps even the walls were of that material. The mechanic arts were much more cultivated in Arabia at this time than in the Western empire. The caliph Alraschid sent a present to Charlemagne of a clock which struck the hours by a bell, the first that had been seen in Europe, and which at that time was admired as a miracle of art.†

Where the state of the useful arts was so low, it is not to be supposed that the fine arts could have been successfully cultivated. Indeed, in those unfavourable periods, had not a spark been kept alive by the existing monuments of ancient taste and genius, the arts of painting and sculpture must have been totally extinguished.‡ As to music, we have authorities for knowing that it was frequently practised in those ages, but probably with no higher claim to excellence than their painting or sculpture. The monk of Ingelheim, in

* "Præcipimus ut in omni regno nostro, neque dives neque pauper peregrinis hospitia denegare audeant: id est sive peregrinis propter Deum ambulantibus per terram, sive cuilibet itineranti. Propter amorem Dei, et propter salutem animæ suæ, tectum et focum et aquam nemo illi deneget."—*Capit. Car. Mag. a Baluzio.*

† Alraschid sent also a natural wonder which would excite no less the curiosity and admiration of a barbarous age —a large elephant.—MEZERAY, tom. i. p. 474.

‡ "Nulla tempora fuere," says Muratori, "quibus pictores desiderati fuerunt. Sed qui, qualesve pictores, bone Deus!"—MURATORI, *Dissertationes*, Diss. 24.

his life of Charlemagne, informs us, that while the emperor was at Rome, there was a contest of skill between the French and Roman musicians, and that the latter instructed the former in the art of playing on the organ.

Architecture, though totally changed in its style from what is properly termed the Grecian, attained, nevertheless, a much higher degree of eminence in those barbarous times, than any other of the fine or useful arts. That style of architecture termed the Gothic, though, by some fastidious critics, most absurdly treated with contempt, has its positive merit and excellence, as well as the Grecian; its character as strongly marked, and its proportions as certainly defined. There is a melancholy majesty, a powerful ingredient of the sublime, which it is the exclusive privilege of this species of architecture to produce.

In those times, the knowledge of letters was confined to a few of the ecclesiastics. Charlemagne himself, however, was by no means illiterate. He spoke Latin with great fluency. Eginhart informs us, that he was curious in the knowledge of the motions of the stars; and that he even tried to write; but this, says the secretary, was a preposterous labour, and too late begun. But the encouragement which Charlemagne gave to literature, and the honours he bestowed on those who successfully cultivated letters, marked a genius beyond the age in which he lived. He was at great pains in inviting learned men from all quarters to reside in his dominions of France. Italy, where letters were not yet totally extinguished, furnished some men of abilities, whom he employed

in teaching the sciences to the Franks. His care extended to that country as well as to France; for the monk of St. Gall informs us, that two Irish priests (Scoti de Hibernia,) having come to France, men eminent for literature, Charlemagne received them with the greatest kindness, and kept one of them in France, while he sent the other to teach the sciences in Italy.* Nothing

* On the authority of the monk of St. Gall, the following anecdote is related of Charlemagne, which marks the strong interest which he took in disseminating among his subjects the advantages of education, and the attention which he personally bestowed on those seminaries of learning which he founded. In an examination of one of these institutions in which were a number of boys, sons of the nobility, as well as of the lowest class of the people, it happened that the latter acquitted themselves very much to the satisfaction of the monarch, while the young noblemen, on the other hand, made a very inferior appearance. Charlemagne, observing this, placed the poor boys on his right hand, and thanked them for their obedience to his orders, and their attention to their studies: "Continue to improve yourselves, my children," said he, "and you shall be well rewarded with bishoprics and abbeys. I will raise you to honour and consequence. But for you," said he, turning to his left, and frowning on the nobles, "you delicate, handsome creatures, you are of high birth and rich, you did not think it necessary to regard my orders, or your own future reputation; you have despised knowledge and given yourselves up to play and laziness, wasting your time in useless amusements; but know," said he, with a tremendous look, as he raised that arm that had won so many victories, "that neither your birth nor beauty shall be of any avail with me, whatever they may with others; for from Charles you have nothing to expect, unless you speedily recover your lost time, and make up for your former idleness by diligence in future."—PULTER'S *Historical Development of the Political State of the German Empire*, book i. c. 6.

is more certain, than that the Britannic Isles, in those ages of darkness, preserved more of the light of learning than the rest of the European kingdoms. *Alcuinus*, whom Charlemagne employed as his preceptor, and honoured with several important embassies—and *Dungallus*, who was likewise in high estimation with that prince for his learning, were both from Britain. Among those most eminent for their abilities in the age of Charlemagne, was likewise our countryman the venerable Bede, who in a variety of works, ecclesiastical, historical, and poetical, showed an extent of learning singular, indeed, for the age in which he lived.*

But, after all, the low state of literature may be figured from the extreme scarcity of books, the subjects on which they were written, and the very high estimation which was put upon them by those who possessed them. The gift of a trifling manuscript to a monastery, of the Life of a Saint, was sufficient to entitle the donor to the perpetual prayers of the brotherhood, and a mass to be celebrated for ever for the salvation of his soul. A complete copy of the sacred Scriptures given to a city or state was esteemed a princely donation. The reputation of learning was then acquired at a very easy rate. Extracts from the different works of the Fathers, literally transcribed, and often patched

* "Neque enim silenda laus Britanniæ, Scotiæ et Hiberniæ, quæ, studio liberalium artium, eo tempore antecellebant reliquis occidentalibus regris; et cura monachorum, qui literarum gloriam alibi aut languentem aut depressam in iis regionibus impigre suscitarunt et tuebantur."—MURATORI, Diss. 43.

together without order or connexion, composed the valuable works of those luminaries and instructors of the age: nothing was more common than those commentaries called *Catenæ*, which were illustrations of some of the books of Scripture, by borrowing sentences successively from half-a-dozen of the Fathers, making each to illustrate a verse in his turn.

In treating of the manners, jurisprudence, and policy of the Goths, some account has already been given of those systems of laws which, by the barbarian tribes, were not injudiciously preferred to the jurisprudence of the more polished nations whom they subdued. Some particulars which distinguished the laws of the northern nations, and especially of the Franks, deserve to be more attentively considered. These are the peculiar fines for homicide, the judgments of God, and the judicial combat.

Among all barbarous nations, the right of private revenge is allowed; which is not only expedient in such a state of society, but absolutely necessary, where there is neither sufficient amplitude in the penal laws to apply to the variety of criminal acts, nor coercive force in any branch of the state to carry such laws into execution. Among the ancient Germans, revenge was always honourable—often meritorious. The independent warrior chastised or vindicated with his own hand the injuries he had received or given; and he had nothing more to dread than the resentment of the sons or kinsmen of the enemy he sacrificed. The magistrate, conscious of his weakness, interposed, not to punish, but to reconcile; and he

was satisfied if he could persuade the aggressor to pay, and the injured party to accept the moderate fine imposed as the price of blood.

When a government has attained to such stability as to allow the improvement of jurisprudence, the quality of persons enters but in very few instances into the consideration of the measure of crimes. The life of the meanest citizen as well as of the highest is under the equal protection of the law. But barbarians cannot reason as wise politicians; and in a state where men are, in a great measure, their own judges and avengers, the most unjust distinctions cannot fail to take place. It was no wonder that the life of a Roman should have been appreciated at a trifle by their barbarian conquerors, who established such distinctions among the ranks of their own citizens, that while some illustrious murders would cost the perpetrator six hundred pieces of gold, others might be expiated for a fine of fifty pieces.

The Visigoths and the Burgundians were the first among the Gothic nations who showed a spirit of equity and impartiality, as well as judicious policy, in deviating from those barbarous distinctions in the laws of their northern brethren. We have noticed the equal severity of the law of the Visigoths, both in the crime of murder and robbery; and the Burgundian code was, in that respect, alike remarkable. So likewise, as the manners of the Franks grew more civilized, their laws became proportionally equitable; and under the reign of Charlemagne, murder was universally punished with death.

The ignorance of the judges, as well as the

weakness of their authority in those rude ages, laid a natural foundation for another singularity in their legal forms, which was, the Judgment of God. A party accused of a crime was allowed to produce a certain number of witnesses, more or fewer, according to the measure of the offence; and if these declared upon oath their belief in the innocence of the accused, it was accounted a sufficient justification. Seventy-two compurgators were required to absolve an incendiary or murderer;* and Gregory of Tours relates, that when the chastity of a queen of France was suspected, three hundred nobles swore, without hesitation, that the infant prince had been actually begotten by her deceased husband.

It is not improbable that the notorious perjuries occasioned by this absurd practice gave rise to another equally preposterous, and much more dangerous to the unhappy criminal. It was in the option of the judge to condemn the party accused to undergo the trial of cold water, of boiling water, or of red-hot iron. They began with the performance of the mass, and the accused person solemnly took the sacrament. If the trial was by cold water, the priest gave his

* "Si quis ingenuus ingenuum castraverit, vel hominem Ripuarium interfecerit, ducentis solidis culpabilis judicetur; aut si negaverit cum duodecim juret.—Si quis eum interfecerit qui in truste regia est, sexcentis solidis culpabilis judicetur; vel si negaverit, cum septuaginta duobus juret. —Si quis ingenuum Ripuarium interfecerit, et eum cum ramo cooperuit, vel in puteo seu in quocunque libet loco celare voluerit, quod dicitur *Mordridus*, sexcentis solidis culpabilis judicetur, aut cum septuaginta duobus juret."—*Leg. Ripuar.*, cap. vi. vii. et xi.

benediction to the water, and performed exorcism, to expel evil spirits. The culprit, tied hand and foot, was then thrown into a pool of water; where, if he sank to the bottom, and probably was drowned, it was a proof of his innocence; but if he swam above, he was accounted certainly guilty, and condemned to death accordingly. The trial by hot water was performed by making the accused person plunge his naked arm into a vessel of boiling water, and fetch from the bottom a consecrated ring. The arm was immediately put into a bag, and sealed up by the judge, to be opened after three days; when, if there were no marks of burning, the culprit was declared innocent.* It is well known that there are compositions which powerfully resist the immediate effects of fire; and which, in all probability, were not unknown in those days, when there was so much occasion for them.

The third proof was by holding in the hand, for a certain space of time, a red-hot iron; or by walking barefooted over several burning ploughshares, or bars of iron. Perhaps it might be possible to elude even the dangers of this experiment, though certainly more difficult than the last. Another ordeal was of a gentler sort; it was performed by consecrating a piece of barley bread and cheese, and giving it to the accused to eat, who, if he was not choked by it, was declared innocent.†

* Capitularia Regum Francorum, a Baluzio, tom. ii. p. 639, et seq.

† Similar modes of trial appear to have formed a part of

Among the most invcterate and longest established of these ancient customs was that of judicial combat. Both in civil and in criminal proceedings, the accuser and the accused were under the necessity of answering a mortal challenge from the antagonist who was destitute of legal proof either to establish or refute a charge. This sanguinary and most iniquitous proceeding, which was calculated to redouble oppression, and add strength to the strong against the weak, continued for many ages to be allowed in all the kingdoms of Europe. So rooted has the custom been, that even the wisdom of more polished ages, and the prohibitory and penal enactments of councils of the church, and of sovereign princes, have been found quite inadequate to restrain it.*

the jurisprudence of many ancient nations. The law of Moses prescribes an ordeal for the trial of the chastity of married women, viz. that the husband who suspected the fidelity of his wife should bring her to the priest with an offering in her hand of a certain quantity of barley-meal; and the priest, after administering a certain form of execration to a cup of water, shall make the woman drink it; under the assurance that, if guilty, the water shall cause her belly to swell, and her thigh to rot.—Numbers, ch. v. The anxiety of conscious guilt is to this day appealed to in a similar manner by the Brahmins of India.

* By a decree of the Council of Trent, the practice of judicial combat is described as a cunning invention of the devil, that, by the death of their bodies, he may get immediate possession of the souls of the combatants; and is prohibited under the highest penalty: any Christian prince permitting the practice within his dominions was to be excommunicated. The combatants themselves were condemned to excommunication, forfeiture of their property, and the person who fell in combat was denied Christian burial. The instigator of a duel, and even the spectators,

In treating of the genius and character of the middle ages, it is necessary, without attempting to give a connected view of ecclesiastical history, to consider the state of the church as connected with the illustration of manners or of national policy. Before the age of Charlemagne, and during that period, the Christian Church was rent into numberless divisions, arising both from disputed points of doctrine, and from less essential matters of forms and ceremonies. The Arian and Pelagian heresies, with the numberless sects which sprung from these as from a parent stem, continued for many years to embroil the church, and to occasion the most violent contentions. We have already observed that Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, who lived in the fourth century, maintained that Christ, the second person of the godhead, was totally distinct from the first person, or God the Father; that Christ was the first, and the noblest of those beings whom God had created out of nothing; that he was the instrument by whose subordinate operation the Almighty Being had formed the universe; and was therefore inferior to him both in nature and dignity. The opi-

were condemned to perpetual excommunication."—*Concil. Trident.* Sess. 9, sub Pont. Pio. A.D. 1563.

The learned Mr. Harris has, in his "Philosophical Inquiries," shown that the custom of the ordeal may be traced up to the time of Eteocles and Polynices, that is, before the Trojan war. The ordeal by red-hot iron is particularly mentioned in the Antigone of Sophocles.—HARRIS'S *Phil. Inquiries*, part 3, chap. 1.

For much fanciful reasoning, and misapplied ingenuity, on the subject of these ancient customs, see Montesquieu, Esprit des Loix, liv. 28, chap. 17.

nions of Arius, with regard to the third person of the Trinity, are not so well known. His doctrine, concerning the inferior nature of the Son of God, was examined, and solemnly debated in the Council of Nice, which was assembled by Constantine, and it was there condemned by a plurality of suffrages. The Nicene creed declared Christ to be consubstantial with the Father, and pronounced a sentence of deposition and banishment on Arius. His doctrines, however, continued to find many zealous supporters, and the emperor Constantine himself, becoming at length a convert to his opinions, recalled Arius from banishment, and ordered the patriarch of Constantinople to restore him to his ecclesiastical functions and dignities. This, however, was prevented by the sudden death of Arius, an event which his enemies interpreted as a judgment of Heaven to punish his heresy and impiety; but which his disciples and partisans attributed to the intolerant zeal of some of his adversaries.

In the fifth century arose the Pelagian heresy. The authors of it were Pelagius and Cælestius, the former a native of Britain, the latter of Ireland. These men looked upon the doctrines commonly received concerning the original corruption of human nature, and the necessity of divine grace to enlighten the understanding and purify the heart, as prejudicial to the progress both of religion and virtue, and tending to lull mankind into a presumptuous and fatal security. They maintained that these doctrines were equally false and pernicious; that the sins of our first parents were imputed to them alone, and not to their posterity;

that we derive no corruption from their fall; but are born as pure and unspotted as Adam came from the hands of his Maker; that mankind, therefore, are capable of repentance and amendment, and of arriving at the highest degree of piety and virtue, by the use of their own natural faculties and powers. These doctrines, which struck deep at the very root and foundation of Christianity, gave a great alarm to the church. They were very ably combated by St. Augustine; and this sect was condemned by an ecclesiastical council, almost as soon as heard of; but its votaries propagated their opinions in secret, and continued to be numerous for several ages.

But not only was the church rent in pieces by these disputes on essential articles of faith; other matters, comparatively of much less importance, excited the most violent commotions. One great article of dissension in those times was the worship of images, which had been gradually gaining ground for some centuries. It arose first from the custom of having crucifixes in private houses, and portraits of our Saviour and his apostles, which sometimes being of considerable value, were, among other religious donations, bequeathed by dying persons to the church, where they were displayed on solemn festivals. The clergy at first took pains to repress that superstition. In the year 393 we find St. Epiphanius pulled down an image in a church of Syria, before which he found an ignorant person saying prayers. Others, however, of his brethren were not so circumspect or scrupulous, and in time the priests even found their interest in encouraging the practice: for

particular images in particular churches, acquiring a higher degree of celebrity than others, and getting the reputation of performing miraculous cures, the grateful donations that were made to the church were a very considerable emolument to the ecclesiastics.

In the year 727, the emperor Leo, the Isaurian, was desirous of extirpating this idolatry, which he very justly considered as disgraceful to Christianity; but his measures were too violent; he burnt and destroyed all the paintings in the churches, and broke to pieces the statues. The people were highly exasperated; and he attempted to enforce his reformation by punishment and persecution, which had no beneficial effect. His son, Constantine Copronymus, took a wiser method, by procuring a general sentence of the clergy, condemning the practice as impious and idolatrous. This prince had a genius for reformation. He wished to abolish the monks, who had greatly increased, and at this time engrossed prodigious wealth; but this evil had taken too deep a root. The origin of these associations merits more particular inquiry.

In treating of the earliest age of the Christian church, it has already been remarked that one great source of the corruption of its doctrines was an attempt to reconcile them to, or intermingle them with, the notions of the heathen philosophers. This intermixture is the true source from whence the impolitic and destructive system of monachism took its rise. It was a doctrine, both of the Stoic and Platonic philosophy, that in order to raise the soul to its highest enjoyment,

and to a communion with superior intelligence, it was necessary to separate it from the body, by mortifying and entirely disregarding that earthly vehicle, which checked its flight, and chained it to the mean and sordid enjoyments of the senses. These prevailing notions of the heathen philosophy, joined to a mistaken interpretation put upon some of the precepts of the gospel, contributed to inspire some enthusiastic Christians with the same ideas. The first of these who thought of separating themselves from society were a few, who, after Constantine had restored peace to the church, being now free from persecution, began to conceive, that since they were no longer exposed to the persecutions of temporal power, they ought to procure for themselves voluntary grievances and afflictions. In that view they betook themselves to wilds and solitudes, where they spent their time in caves and hermitages, in alternate exercises of devotion, and in rigorous acts of penance and mortification. Some of them loaded their limbs with heavy irons; others walked naked till their bodies acquired a covering of hair like the wild beasts; and others chose still more nearly to ally themselves to the brute creation, by actually grazing with them in the fields. One father, called a *saint*, has actually left a panegyric on these βοσκοι, or grazing saints. A certain class, however, of a more rational spirit of devotion, employed themselves occasionally in manual labour, the price of which afforded them a frugal subsistence, and enabled them to bestow alms on the poor who visited their cells.

Egypt is allowed to have shown the first ex-

ample of the monastic life. A young fanatic, of the name of Antony, retired about the year 302 to the desert bordering the Red Sea, where his austerities first attracted admiration and respect, and afterwards procured him numberless imitators. He lived to the age of 105, and had the satisfaction of seeing, before his death, the whole country swarming with madmen like himself.

The reputation which these persons acquired for superior sanctity, and the extraordinary blessings which were believed to attend their pious vows and prayers, naturally procured them many remuneratory donations from those who believed they had profited by their intercessions. Some of the holy men began to lead a very comfortable life; and, still pretending to bestow all their superfluities in alms and charitable donations, they retained as much as to enable them to pass their time with much ease and satisfaction. Towards the end of the fourth century, these monks or hermits had multiplied in such a manner that there was not a province in the East that was not full of them. They spread themselves likewise over a great part of Africa; and in the West, they penetrated within the limits of the bishopric of Rome, and soon became very numerous over all Italy.

It would seem that these holy fathers did not always confine themselves to their cells; but, profiting by the great veneration which they had acquired for superior sanctity, they frequently found their way to cities, and took an active part in secular affairs. Under Theodosius the Great, some of these meddling priests had occasioned

such disturbances in the empire, that that prince, on a complaint from the judges and magistrates of the provinces, issued an edict prohibiting them to quit their solitudes, or appear in the cities; but they had art or influence enough with this same prince to prevail on him, very soon after, to revoke this edict.

About this time many of these devotees began to form themselves into societies, and prescribed to themselves certain observances and common rules, to which they bound themselves by oath; these were obedience to their superiors, strict chastity, and poverty. These societies were called *Cœnobia;* and the persons who composed them Cœnobitæ, from their living together in common. But they took different denominations, from the names of those holy persons who associated them together, or were the first superiors of their order. Thus St. Benedict, who introduced monachism into Italy, was the founder of that particular order called Benedictine, which has distinguished itself in most of the countries of Europe, by the ambition of many of the brotherhood, as well as by the enormous wealth which they found means to accumulate; and, we ought to add, by the laborious learning which some of them displayed.

Benedict was an Italian by birth; he had studied at Rome, and soon distinguished himself by his talents as well as superior sanctity. An affectation of singularity, probably, made him retire, when a very young man, to a cave at Subiaco, where he remained for some years. Some neighbouring hermits chose him for their

head or superior; and the donations which they received from the devout and charitable very soon enabled them to build a large monastery. The reputation of Benedict increased daily, and he began to perform miracles, which attracted the notice of Totila, the Gothic king of Italy. The number of his fraternity was daily augmented, and it became customary for the rich to make large donations. We may judge of the reputation which Benedict's institution had acquired, even in his own lifetime, from this fact—that the celebrated Cassiodorus, who had long and ably discharged the office of first minister to the Gothic king of Italy, in the decline of his life, took the vows of the Benedictine order, and founded a monastery on his own estate; where, in the exercises of devotion, in the enjoyment of the tranquillity of the country, and in the composition of those excellent works which he has left to posterity, he passed the remainder of his days.

Benedict, finding his fraternity grow extremely numerous, sent colonies into Sicily and into France, where they throve amazingly. Hence they transported themselves into England; and, in a very little time, there was not a kingdom of Europe where the Benedictines had not obtained a footing.

In the East, the first who associated the *monachi solitarii* into a *cœnobium*, was Basil, the bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, in the middle of the fourth century. From thence they spread themselves into Greece, and overran the Eastern empire, as the Benedictines had done in the West. Monasteries for women were in the same age founded in Egypt,

by St. Pacomo, whose sister became the abbess of the first female convent. These females, after a certain time of probation, received the veil, and took the vows of perpetual virginity, obedience, and poverty.

From the Cœnobia, founded by Bazil, Benedict, and Pacomo, there sprung in the following age an infinite number of other orders, under different rules. St. Augustine, in Africa, established the *Canons Regular*, whose order, we are told, was framed in imitation of the apostolic life; whence, we may suppose, they followed in their cells different occupations as artisans. Afterwards the Mendicants arose, who, to the three vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, added that of living by begging charity.

It was not for some centuries after the period of which we now treat, that the military religious orders took their rise, such as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, the Teutonic Knights, and the Templars.

What contributed very much, however, to increase the reputation of the monastic fraternities, in those unenlightened periods, was that portion of scholastic learning which was almost peculiar to them; and moderate as that degree of knowledge was, it certainly prevented the entire extinction of ancient literature, and preserved some feeble sparks, which the care of a happier age afterwards cherished and raised up to warm and enlighten the world.

As the affectation of superior sanctity, and the pride of being singular, gave rise to many of the austerities of the monastic life, the same motive led some men to seclude themselves from social

life in a still more extraordinary manner than that practised by any of the religious orders. These men were termed *Stylites*, or Pillar Saints. They mounted themselves on the tops of stone pillars, and stood there immoveable for many years. One Simeon, a native of Syria, gave the first example of this most amazing folly, and passed thirty-seven years of his life upon pillars of various heights, beginning with one of nine feet, and, increasing from year to year, till he died on a pillar of forty cubits. Another saint, of the same name, lived sixty-eight years in the same manner. The veneration which these holy men acquired excited a number of imitators, and their degrees of sanctity were always estimated according to the height of their pillars, and the number of years they had passed upon them. For above six centuries this superstitious frenzy prevailed in the East, nor was the practice altogether abolished till the twelfth century.

In the age of Charlemagne, according to the received opinion of Protestants, auricular confession began first to be used. The bishops commenced the practice, by requiring that the canons should confess to them. The abbots obliged their monks to the same submission; and these again required it of the laity. Public confession was now in use in the West; for when the Goths embraced Christianity, their instructors from the East had seen it abolished there under the patriarch Nectarius, at the end of the fourth century.

The canonization of saints was practised by every bishop for twelve centuries: at length, the number growing out of all bounds, the popes

thought it necessary to assume the exclusive right of canonization. Pope Alexander III., one of the most profligate of men, was the first who issued a solemn decree reserving to himself the sole right of making saints.

Christianity was carried northward by the conquests of Charlemagne; but all beyond the limits of his conquests was in a state of idolatry. All Scandinavia was idolatrous. Poland was in the same state; and the whole inhabitants of that immense tract of country which is now the empire of Russia were pagans, like their neighbours of Tartary. The British and Irish, according to the most probable accounts, had, long before this period, received the first rays of Christianity; but in Britain it was almost totally extinguished, till it was revived under the Saxon heptarchy, by the wife of one of the princes; as the Franks, in like manner, owed to the wife of Clovis their conversion from idolatry.

CHAPTER IV.

Successors of Charlemagne—Their Weakness and Dissensions—Rise of the Feudal Aristocracy—First Incursions of the Normans—Their Settlement in Normandy—State of the Eastern Empire—of Italy and the Church—Rise of the Secular power of the Popedom—Schism of the Greek and Latin Churches—the Saracens conquer Spain—Extinction of the Empire of Charlemagne—Empire of Germany—Otho the Great.

Louis, surnamed the Débonnaire, was the only one of the lawful sons of Charlemagne who survived him. He had been, before his father's death, associated with him in the empire, and was now hailed emperor and king of France by the nobles assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle. He was afterwards inaugurated by Pope Stephen IV. It has already been noticed that Charlemagne, on the death of his son Pepin, bestowed on his grandson Bernard the kingdom of Italy. Louis commenced his reign by making a partition of his dominions. He associated his eldest son Lotharius as his colleague in the principal part of his kingdom. He gave Aquitaine, or that part of the southern provinces of France, which forms about a third part of the whole kingdom, to his second son Pepin, and assigned Bavaria to Louis the youngest. The three princes were solemnly crowned, and the two youngest immediately put in possession of their

kingdoms. This procedure alarmed the jealousy and indignation of Bernard king of Italy, who, as son of the elder brother of Louis, thought he had a preferable title to the empire of his grandfather Charlemagne. The archbishops of Milan and Cremona espoused his cause; but the unhappy prince was too weak to make his pretensions effectual: abandoned by his troops, he was forced to throw himself on the mercy of his uncle, who inhumanly ordered his eyes to be put out, which occasioned his death.

In the partition of his empire, Louis had shown the height of imprudence. He had given the whole to his three sons, Lotharius, Pepin, and Louis. A fourth son was born to him of a second marriage, Charles, afterwards surnamed the Bald, for whom it became necessary to provide a patrimony. This could not be done without giving umbrage to the three elder brothers, who were in fact now independent sovereigns. Each had his party who espoused his interest; and the kingdom was a scene of turbulence and anarchy. Complaints were heard in every quarter, of the most outrageous abuses; and Louis, seriously wishing to redress the grievances of his subjects, called a general assembly, or *champ de mai*, at Aix-la-Chapelle. Here an arrogant monk, named Valla, either instigated by a party, or by the insolent rancour of his own disposition, took upon him to accuse the emperor publicly as being the author of the general calamities; he reproached him with his design of providing for his youngest son, whom he stigmatized as a bastard, at the expense of the elder, who, he

said, had as good a right to their crowns as Louis to his own. The pusillanimous Louis patiently heard these invectives; and, instead of inflicting on their author that punishment which he so amply deserved, he contented himself with dismissing the factious monk to his convent, where he remained no longer than till, by his incendiary machinations, he had brought the three brothers openly to declare war against their father. It was in vain that Louis proposed terms of accommodation—that he set forth the equity and probity of his intentions, and summoned assemblies of the states to devise the most probable means of securing the peace of the empire. The princes were exasperated; the ecclesiastic had gained to his party several bishops and abbotts; and Gregory IV., as the popes now saw it was for their interest to humble the emperors, took a decided part with the rebels. Gregory came to France, and threatened the emperor with excommunication. The French bishops, on the emperor's side, showed a becoming spirit. They threatened the pope, in their turn, with excommunication—*Si excommunicaturus veniet, excommunicatus abibit.* But Gregory had both resolution and artifice. While a negotiation was on foot, the pope was admitted into Louis's camp; he corrupted one half of his army, and on the night of his departure they abandoned their sovereign, and repaired to the standard of Lotharius. The unhappy Louis surrendered himself a prisoner to his rebellious children, and delivered up the empress, with his son Charles—the innocent cause of the war. The empress, as the highest mark of indignity that could be offered to her, had her

head shaved, and was thrown into prison; and Charles, then a boy of ten years of age, was confined in a convent. Valla, the monk, now proclaimed the throne vacated by Louis, and Lotharius was declared emperor. The first step of his administration was infamous and detestable. He compelled his father—whose paternal affection, weak indeed and imprudent, had associated him in the imperial dignity—to do public penance in the church of Notre Dame at Soissons, and to read with a loud voice a list which was given him of his crimes, among which appeared impiety, sacrilege, and murder. He was then conducted to a monastery, where he was confined for a year, till the dissensions of his children again replaced him on the throne. Louis and Pepin, quarrelling with their elder brother Lotharius, restored Lous le Débonnaire to his kingdom, and brought the empress and her son from banishment; but he did not long enjoy his change of fortune; for his son Louis again commencing a rebellion, the weak and unfortunate father died of a broken heart.

The ruinous policy of this unhappy and despicable prince had introduced irrecoverable weakness and disorder into the empire. Lotharius, now emperor, and Pepin, his brother's son, took up arms against the two other sons of Louis le Débonnaire, Louis of Bavaria and Charles the Bald. A battle ensued at Fontenai, in the territory of Auxerre, where it is said there perished 100,000 men. Lotharius and his nephew were vanquished. Charlemagne had compelled the nations whom he subdued to embrace Christianity; Lotharius, to acquire popularity and strengthen his arms, de-

clared an entire liberty of conscience throughout the empire, and many thousands reverted to their ancient idolatry. In punishment of this impiety, Lotharius was now solemnly deposed by a council of bishops, who took upon them to show their authority no less over the victorious than over the vanquished princes. They put this question to Charles the Bald and to Louis of Bavaria—"Do you promise to govern better than Lotharius has done?" "We do," said the obsequious monarchs. "Then," returned the bishops, "we, by divine authority, permit and ordain you to reign in his stead"—a proceeding in which it is difficult to say whether the arrogance of the clergy most excites our indignation, or the pusillanimity of the monarchs our contempt.

Lotharius, though excommunicated and deprived of his imperial dignity by these overbearing ecclesiastics, found means, at last, to accommodate matters so with his brothers, that they agreed to a new partition of the empire. By the treaty of Verdun, concluded between the brothers, it was settled that the western Frankish empire, or the country now called France, which was to be the share of Charles the Bald, should have for its boundaries the four great rivers, the Rhone, the Saone, the Maese, and the Scheldt. Lotharius, together with the *title* of emperor, was to possess the kingdom—which was in fact little more than a nominal sovereignty; but to which was added, of real territory, those provinces which lay immediately adjoining to the eastern boundary of France; viz. that which from him took the name of Lotharingia, now Lorraine, Franche Comté, Hainault,

and the Cambresis. The share of Louis of Bavaria was the kingdom of Germany.

Thus Germany was finally separated from the empire of the Franks. The shadow of the Roman empire founded by Charlemagne still subsisted. Lotharius, after procuring his son Louis to be consecrated king of Lombardy by pope Sergius II., being attacked by a mortal distemper, chose to die in the habit of a monk, which he thought a sure passport to heaven. He was succeeded in the empire and kingdom by his eldest son Louis. He had assigned Lorraine to his second son Lotharius, and Burgundy to his youngest son Charles. Among these princes and their uncles, Louis of Bavaria and Charles the Bald, endless contentions arose; and the vast empire of Charlemagne, the scene of perpetual war and disorders, was fast sinking into contempt. On the death of Louis II., Charles the Bald attempted, but without success, to wrest from the sons of Louis of Bavaria the empire of Germany. His own kingdom of France was at this time visited by the inroads of his Norman neighbours, and groaned under all the calamities of war at home as well as abroad. The Saracens attacked him on the side of Italy; his nephew Carloman, son of Louis of Bavaria, had invaded his dominions; and a conspiracy of his nobles threatened both his crown and life. He is said to have fallen a victim to this conspiracy, and to have died by poison.

Charles the Bald was the first of the French monarchs who made dignities and titles hereditary —a policy which gave a severe blow to the regal authority. It was indeed under the reigns of these

weak princes of the posterity of Charlemagne that the feudal aristocracy first began to strengthen itself against the power of the crown. Walled castles and fortresses were erected by the nobility throughout France and Germany, from which they sallied out at the head of their armed vassals, to plunder and lay waste the possessions of their rivals. We find in the capitularies of Charles the Bald, a royal ordonnance prohibiting the erection of such castles, but the edict was contemned, and the sovereign had no power to enforce his prohibition. From this period, the barbarous custom of private war prevailed in all the kingdoms of Europe, and marked alike the weakness of the sovereign power, and the general ferocity of manners in the middle ages.

The Normans, a new race of invaders from Scandinavia, began, under the reign of Charles the Bald, to attract the attention and alarm the fears of most of the European nations. The kingdoms of Scandinavia, which have been termed *officina humani generis*, seem to have resembled a bee-hive, of which the stock multiplies so fast, that it is necessary to send off immense swarms from time to time, to seek new establishments for themselves, and to leave a sufficiency of subsistence for those that remain behind. The Normans, or *Northern-men*, were a new race of Goths, who poured down in a torrent upon the countries to the south of them. They had begun their depredations towards the end of the reign of Charlemagne; but the terror of his arms prevented them from making any considerable encroachment on his empire. Under Louis the Débonnaire they made further

advances. They were expert at ship-building, and at that time constructed vessels capable of containing about one hundred men. In the year 843 they sailed up the Seine, and plundered the city of Rouen. Another fleet sailed up the Loire, and laid waste the whole country as far as Touraine. They did not confine their depredations to cattle, goods, provisions, or money, but carried off men, women, and children into captivity. Emboldened by the little resistance they met with under a weak and impotent administration, they in the following year covered the sea with their fleets, and landed almost at the same time in England, France, and Spain. Spain, then under a vigorous Mahometan government, took measures to repel the invaders, and succeeded; but in France and England, the state of the country was highly favourable to the success of their enterprise.

In the year 845, the Normans sailed up the Elbe, plundered Hamburgh, and penetrated into Germany. They had at this time a fleet of 600 ships, with Eric, king of Denmark, at their head. He detached Regnier, one of his admirals, with 420 vessels, up the Seine; Rouen was plundered a second time, and the corsairs proceeded along the river to Paris. The Parisians took to flight, and, abandoning the city, it was burnt down by the Normans. The city was at that time entirely built of wood. Charles the Bald, too weak to make head against the invaders with his forces, gave them 14,000 marks of silver on condition of their evacuating France—the most effectual means to secure their return. Accordingly, they quitted the Seine, but sailed up the Garonne, and plundered

Bordeaux. Pepin, then king of Aquitaine, conducted himself yet worse than Charles the Bald; for, being unable to resist the invaders, he shamefully joined them, and united his forces to assist them in ravaging the whole kingdom of France. Germany, Flanders, and England, shared the miseries of this confederacy. Charles, surnamed the Gross, equally pusillanimous with his predecessors of the blood of Charlemagne, yielded a part of Holland to the Normans, in the view of pacifying them; the consequence was, that they seized upon Flanders, passed without resistance from the Somme to the river Oise, burnt the town of Pontoise, and proceeded a second time with great alacrity to Paris. The Parisians, however, were now better prepared for their reception. Count Odo, or Eudes, whose valour afterwards raised him to the throne of France, was determined that his countrymen should not basely abandon their capital as before. He made every preparation for defence and for vigorous resistance. The Normans applied the battering-ram to the walls, and effected a breach, but were bravely beat off by the besieged. The venerable Bishop Gosselin, an honour to his character and profession, repaired every day to the ramparts, set up there the standard of the cross, and, after bestowing his benedictions on the people, fought gallantly at their head, armed with his battle-axe and cuirass; but the worthy prelate died of fatigue in the midst of the siege. The memory of this good man, although the scruples of pious catholics have denied him canonization, is more precious, more truly respectable, than half their calendar.

The Normans blocked up the city for eighteen months, during which time the miserable Parisians suffered all the horrors of famine and pestilence. At length, another shameful truce was concluded between the barbarians and Charles the Gross, which, like the former, served only to make them change the scene of their devastations. They laid siege to the town of Sens, and plundered Burgundy, while Charles assembled a parliament at Mentz, which, with great propriety, deprived this pitiful monarch of a throne which he was unworthy to fill. This assembly called to the empire Arnold, a bastard, of the blood of Charlemagne; while Eudes, count of Paris, was elected King of France.

Raoul, or Rollo, the most distinguished of the Scandinavian leaders, having assembled an immense body of troops, made a landing in England in the year 885. After some successes in that quarter, he steered his course to France, where he began to think of forming a fixed establishment. His son, the second Rollo, repaired the city of Rouen, which he determined to make his capital; and, marrying the daughter of Charles the Simple, to whom Eudes had ceded the crown and part of the dominions of France, Rollo acquired the provinces of Normandy and Brittany as her portion. He embraced the Christian faith, and turned his thoughts to the improvement of his provinces and the happiness of his subjects. The Danes and Scandinavians, now settled in Normandy, and, uniting with the Franks, produced that race of warriors whom we shall presently see the conquerors of England and of Sicily.

While the empire of Charlemagne was thus hastening to its downfall under his degenerate successors, that of Constantinople exhibited an appearance in some respects still venerable and respectable. It has been compared by the fanciful Voltaire to an immense tree, still vigorous, though old and stripped of some of its roots, and assailed on every side by violent storms. This empire had nothing left in Africa, and had lost Syria, with part of Asia Minor. It still defended its frontiers against the Mahometans towards the eastern coast of the Black Sea, but it was ravaged by other enemies towards the western coast and towards the Danube. The Abari and Bulgarians, both tribes of Scythian extraction, laid waste all the fine province of Romania, which Trajan and Adrian had adorned with splendid cities; and, growing more adventurous by their successes, they alternately committed ravages on the empires of the East and the West.

While the frontiers of the Eastern empire were thus attacked by the barbarians, Constantinople itself was for some ages the theatre of disgraceful revolutions, achieved by the most atrocious crimes. The attention dwells with horror on the bloody tragedies of this period:—one emperor assassinated in revenge of murder and incest; another poisoned by his own wife; a third stabbed in the bath by his servants; a fourth plucking out the eyes of his brothers; a mother the murderer of her own son, that she might herself enjoy his throne. Of such complexion was that series of sovereigns who swayed the empire of the East for nearly two hundred years.

To increase the misfortunes of the empire, the Russians, in the tenth century, embarking on the *Palus Mœotis* or Sea of Asoph, sailed through the Cimmerian Bosphorus, and ravaged the whole coasts of the Euxine Sea; while the Turks, a new race of barbarians of Scythian or Tartarian extraction, began also to make inroads on the Eastern empire. But of the first migration of these invaders we have hardly any authentic account.

Under all these misfortunes, Constantinople still remained the most populous, the most opulent, and the most polished city of Christendom. It was probably indebted for its welfare, amid all these distresses, to its extensive commerce, the consequence of its situation, which gives it the command of two seas.

At this period, the affairs of Italy and the church form an important feature in the history of Europe. We have seen with what consummate art the popes laid the foundation of their temporal authority under Pepin and Charlemagne, the donations from these princes conferring on them their first territorial possessions, which were part of the dominions of the Lombard kings. The popes now began to consider themselves as sovereigns, in every sense of the word, and to take all prudent measures for the security of that power which they had acquired. Gregory IV. repaired the harbour of Ostia, at the mouth of the Tyber; and Leo IV. fortified the city of Rome. It was somewhat singular that there was still in Rome a vestige remaining of the ancient form of the republican constitution. Two consuls were elected every year; and a prefect was created, who was a

kind of tribune of the people. Over these magistrates, however, the popes extended an absolute control and jurisdiction, and became soon the temporal sovereigns of Italy.

As the spiritual heads of the church, and the representatives and successors of St. Peter, the jurisdiction claimed by these ambitious men was not confined to the kingdom of Italy. They held forth, as a consequence of being the vicars of Christ upon earth, that they were vested with a supreme jurisdiction, in matters ecclesiastical, in all the Christian kingdoms of Europe. Pope Nicholas I., in his apostolical bulls and letters, published to all Christendom that a right of appeal lay to the holy see from the sentences of all church judicatures whatever; that it was therefore necessary and proper that the pope should have his legates in all Christian countries, to preserve the rights of the church; that it belonged to the pope alone to call the general councils, and that the canons or regulations of these councils were of much higher authority than any civil laws; that it was proper for subjects to give due obedience to their temporal sovereigns while *they* conducted themselves dutifully to the holy church, but otherwise they were tyrants, to whom the people owed no allegiance. It is easy to see the tendency of these maxims, to which it is not a little surprising that the princes of Europe for many ages should have paid the most implicit deference.

A literary forgery of a very extraordinary nature was called in, to give authority to these assumed powers. About the middle of the ninth century a

book appeared, under the name of Isidorus, bishop of Seville, alleged to have been compiled by that prelate about the year 630, which contained a set of fabricated letters of the bishops of Rome, as far back as the year 93—together with fictitious, or at least mutilated and interpolated, decrees of councils; the scope of all which was to prove that the bishop of Rome was the direct successor of St. Peter, and inherited his apostolical character, and that the foundations of the church rested on him; that all bishops and ministers should be independent of the secular powers, and exempted from taxes; that the church was paramount in authority over all the princes and sovereigns of the earth; that the head of the church could excommunicate and depose them, and absolve all subjects from their allegiance. This precious code, of which the forgery was not fully exposed till the sixteenth century, had a most powerful effect in those ages of ignorance and superstition, as it appeared to contain the clear sense of the Christian church on those most material articles, transmitted down from the earliest periods, and acknowledged without the smallest dispute.*

Yet, in the middle of the ninth century, and at a time when the papal authority was at its height, one circumstance of a very extraordinary nature is said to have occurred, which, with evil-disposed men, threw much ridicule upon the clergy, and

* On this curious subject see Putter. Hist. Develop. of the German Empire, b. i. chap. 7; Cosin's Scholastical Hist. of the Canons of Scripture, chap. vii. § 83; Mosheim's Ecclesiast. Hist. cent. ix. part ii. chap. ii. § 8.

particularly on the holy see—as, if true, it certainly interrupted that so much vaunted succession of regular bishops which is said to have followed from the days of St. Peter to the present. This was no less than the election of a woman to the dignity of the popedom. Between the pontificate of Leo IV., who died in the year 855, and that of Benedict III., who was elected in 858, a certain woman, who had the address to disguise her sex for a considerable time, is said, by learning, genius, and great address, to have made her way to the papal chair, and to have governed the church for two years, till her holiness was unfortunately detected by bearing a child in the midst of a religious procession. This real or fabulous personage is known by the title of Pope Joan. During five centuries this event was generally believed, and a vast number of writers bore testimony to its truth; nor until the period of the reformation of Luther was it considered by any as either incredible in itself or ignominious to the church. But in the seventeenth century, the existence of this female pontiff became the subject of a keen and learned controversy between the protestants and the catholics; the former supporting the truth of the fact, and the latter endeavouring to invalidate the evidence on which it rests. Mosheim, a very learned and acute writer, steers a middle course; and though he is disposed to doubt the many absurd and ridiculous circumstances with which the story has been embellished, for the purpose of throwing ridicule on the head of the Romish church, yet is inclined to think that it is not wholly

without foundation. Gibbon treats the story as a mere fable.*

It is curious to remark, that while the clergy were steadily aiming at temporal power, secular princes, as if interchanging character with them, seem to have fixed their chief attention on spiritual concerns. The monastic life was now universally in the highest esteem, and nothing could equal the veneration that was paid to such as devoted themselves to the sacred gloom and indolence of a convent. The Greeks and Orientals had long been accustomed to regard the monkish discipline with the greatest veneration, but at this time the same folly had infected the whole of Europe. Kings, dukes, and counts, regarding their secular duties as mean and sordid, beheld with contempt every thing that regarded this world, and, abandoning their thrones and temporal honours, shut themselves up in monasteries, and devoted themselves entirely to the exercises of prayer and mortification. Others, whose zeal had not led them quite so far, showed their reverence for the church by employing ecclesiastics in every department of secular government. At this time all embassies, negotiations, and treaties of state, were conducted by monks and abbots, who most naturally contrived that all public measures should contribute to the great end of advancing the sovereign and paramount jurisdiction of the pope and the ecclesiastical councils.

At this period, however, when every thing

* For an ingenious statement of the whole controversy, see Bayle's Dict. art. Papesse Jeanne.

seemed to concur in increasing the power of the popedom, that remarkable schism took place which separated the Greek from the Latin church. The patriarchal see of Constantinople was the object of ambitious contention, as well as the imperial throne. The emperor, dissatisfied with the patriarch Ignatius, deposed him from his office, and put Photius, eunuch of the palace, a man of great talents and abilities, in his place. Pope Nicholas, jealous of his authority, which he had soon reason to think was encroached on by the patriarchs of Constantinople, who had withdrawn the provinces of Illyrium, Macedonia, Achaia, Thessaly, and Sicily, from their dependence on the holy see, sent a solemn embassy to Constantinople to reclaim those provinces. His demand was treated with contempt, and the patriarch of Constantinople avowed openly his pretensions to an equality of power with the Roman pontiff. Pope Nicholas determined to vindicate his authority against this formidable usurpation, and for this reason took the part of Ignatius, the deposed patriarch, against Photius, who had been raised to that dignity by the emperor. He thundered out a sentence of excommunication against Photius, deposing him from his sacerdotal function; to which Photius replied by excommunicating the pope, and deposing him from the apostolical chair. He then assumed the title of *Œcumenical* or General Patriarch, and accused all the western bishops of heresy, not only for adhering to the Roman pontiff, but for various heterodox articles of doctrine, and unchristian practices: such, for example, as using unleavened bread in the sacrament; eating cheese

and eggs in Lent; shaving their beards; and, lastly, that they prohibited priests to marry, and separated from their wives such married men as chose to go into orders. The last of these articles, he alleged, gave rise to the most scandalous immoralities. During the dependence of this dispute between the pontiffs, Michael, the emperor, who had raised Photius to the patriarchal chair, was murdered by his rival Basileus, who, immediately on his mounting the imperial throne, deposed the patriarch in the midst of his triumph; and a council of the church being called at this time, at Rome, Photius was unanimously condemned to do penance for his usurpations and heresies. Soon after, however, Photius, who was a man of consummate ability, prevailed on the emperor to reinstate him as patriarch, and he was now declared innocent by four hundred bishops, three hundred of whom were the same men who had before signed his condemnation. This is a disgraceful picture of depravity: but conscience and religion are too weak to combat against state policy.

While the pope found it for his interest to be on good terms with the emperor of the East, there was great peace and harmony in the general councils, and no controversies arose on disputed articles of faith or discipline. Pope John VIII. was a good politician; but his successors, having quarrelled with the Greek empire, adopted the decrees of that council which had condemned Photius, and rejected those of the last council, which had acquitted him. Photius, on his part, immediately resumed the accusation of heretical

tenets, the celibacy of the clergy, shaving the beard, and eating eggs in Lent; and, at once, contended for the supremacy of the see of Constantinople over all the bishops in Christendom. Photius, whose life was strangely chequered with good and evil fortune, was deposed, and died in disgrace; but his successors adhered to his pretensions and supported them with vigour, so that, for many ages, the dispute continued with great animosity.*

During these perpetual contests for ecclesiastical power and pre-eminence, the Christian religion itself was debased both by the practice and the principles of its teachers. The sole object of the clergy was to accumulate wealth and temporal distinctions. While they indulged in every species of voluptuousness and debauchery, they were so deplorably ignorant, that it is confidently asserted there were many bishops who could not repeat the Apostles' Creed, nor read the Sacred Scriptures. This, indeed, was a necessary consequence of the iniquitous distribution of ecclesiastical preferments.

* Photius was in all respects a remarkable man. During a life almost constantly embroiled in political intrigues, he yet found time to cultivate letters with high success; and there are several of his works remaining which evince a great depth of erudition, a surprising diversity of knowledge, and much critical judgment. Of these the most remarkable is his "Bibliotheca," which contains an analytical account of about two hundred and eighty of the most celebrated of the ancient Greek writers, the greatest part of whose works have perished; so that this analysis of Photius, which is most minute and accurate, and in many instances an abridgment of the original works, is, on that account, an invaluable composition.

These were either sold to the highest bidder, or were bestowed as bribes by the sovereigns and superior pontiffs, to attach the most artful and often the most worthless to their interest. Hence it was that the most flagitious and ignorant wretches were frequently advanced to the highest stations in the church; and that upon several occasions civil magistrates, artificers, and even soldiers, were by a strange metamorphosis converted into bishops and abbots.

While the Constantinopolitan empire was thus entirely occupied with theological dissensions, which produced no other fruit than intestine division and weakness, the Saracens, equally zealous in propagating the doctrines of their false prophet, studied, at the same time, the aggrandizement of their empire, and were making rapid encroachments on the territories of the Christian princes. In the beginning of the eight century, they subverted the dominion of the Visigoths in Spain; and, with very little difficulty, achieved the conquest of the whole of that peninsula.

The caliphs, as already observed, had in a very few years from the first foundation of their empire by Mahomet, reared up a most extensive dominion in Asia, Africa, and Europe. In Africa they were masters of all that had formerly been subject to the Roman power; and, at the time of which we now treat, they had lately founded the city of Morocco, in the neighbourhood of Mount Atlas. The caliph, Valid Almanzor, had given the government of his African states to his viceroy Muza, who, projecting the conquest of Spain, sent thither his lieutenant Tariffe with a very consider-

able army. The situation of the country was at the time extremely favourable for such an enterprise. Witiza, the Gothic prince, was one of the weakest of men, and his successor Rodrigo one of the most wicked and profligate. The Goths were attached by no affection to their governors, and it was with difficulty that an armed force was collected sufficient to take the field against the invaders. In one memorable engagement Rodrigo lost his life, and the Saracens, in the year 713, became masters of the whole country. The conquerors did not abuse their success; they left the vanquished Goths in possession of their property, their laws, and their religion. Abdallah, the Moor, married the widow of Rodrigo, and the two nations formed a perfect coalition. In the space of thirty months all Spain had been joined to the empire of the caliphs, except the Rocks of Asturias, where Pelayo, a relation of the last king Rodrigo, preserved his liberty, kept a sort of court, and, as the Spanish historians say, transmitted his crown to his son Favila, who maintained for several years this little remnant of a Christian monarchy in the midst of the conquerors of his country. The Moors, for some time, carried every thing before them, and pushed their conquests beyond the Pyrenees into Gaul; but a spirit of division arising among their emirs, or governors, some of whom aimed at independent power, Louis the Débonnaire took advantage of these disturbances, sent an army into Spain, and invested Barcelona, which he took after a siege of two years.

From this period the Moorish power in the north

of Spain began to decline; they had shaken off the dependence of their caliphs, and they were no longer supported by their countrymen of Africa. The Christian monarchy in the heart of the Asturias began at this time to recover vigour. Alphonso the Chaste, who was of the race of Pelayo, refused any longer to pay the annual tribute which the Moors had exacted. The Christians of Navarre followed the example of their brethren of the Asturias, and chose for themselves a king, as did likewise those of the province of Aragon; and in a few years neither the Mahometans nor the French were in possession of any part of the northern provinces. It was at this time that the Normans invaded Spain; but, meeting with a repulse which they did not expect, they turned back and plundered France and England.

While the Moors were thus losing ground in the north of Spain, their countrymen had established a very flourishing monarchy in the southern part of the peninsula. Abdalrahman, the last heir of the family of the Ommiades, the caliphate being now possessed by the Abassidæ, betook himself to Spain, where, being recognized by a great part of the Saracens in that country as the representative of their ancient caliphs, he encountered and defeated the viceroy of the rival caliph, and was acknowledged sovereign of all the Moorish possessions in the south of Spain. He fixed the seat of his residence at Cordova, which from that time and for two centuries after, was distinguished as the capital of a very splendid monarchy. It is this period, from the middle of the eighth to the

middle of the tenth century, which is to be accounted the most flourishing age of Arabian magnificence. While Haroun Alraschid made Bagdad the seat of a great and polished empire, and cultivated the arts and sciences with high success, the Moors of Cordova, under Abdalrahman and his successors, vied with their Asiatic brethren in the same honourable pursuits, and were, unquestionably, the most enlightened of the states of Europe at this period. The empire of the Franks, indeed, under Charlemagne, exhibited a beautiful picture of order, sprung from confusion and weakness, but terminating with the reign of this illustrious monarch, and leaving no time for the arts introduced by him to make any approach to perfection. The Moors of Spain, under a series of princes, who gave every encouragement to genius and industry, though fond at the same time of military glory, gained the reputation of superiority both in arts and arms to all the nations of the West. The Moorish structures in Spain, which were reared during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, many of which yet remain, convey an idea of opulence and grandeur which almost exceeds belief. The mosque of Cordova, begun by Abdalrahman the First, and finished about the year 800, is still almost entire, and countenances every notion which historians have given of the splendour and magnificence of the Moorish monarchy of Spain.

The Saracens were at this time extending their conquests in almost every quarter of the world. The Mahometan religion was now embraced over the most of India, and all along the Eastern and

Mediterranean coast of Africa. Some of the African Saracens invaded Sicily, as they had done Spain, and the arms neither of the eastern nor of the western emperors were able to drive them out of it. From Sicily they began to meditate the conquest of Italy; they sailed up the Tiber, ravaged the country, and laid siege to Rome. A French army, under one of Lotharius's generals, advancing to its relief, was beaten; but the city, in the meantime, being supplied with provisions, the Saracens thought fit to desist for a while, until they should increase their forces. On this occasion Pope Leo IV. showed himself worthy of being a sovereign. He employed the treasures of the church in fortifying the city, stretching iron chains across the Tiber, and making every preparation for a vigorous defence. The spirit of an ancient Roman seemed revived in this venerable pontiff; he infused courage and resolution into all around him. The Saracens, on attempting to land, were furiously driven back and cut to pieces: a storm had dispersed one half of their ships; and the invaders, unable to retreat, were either slaughtered or made prisoners.

The Saracens might have reared an immense empire, had they, like the Romans, acknowledged only one head; but their generals always affected independence. Egypt shook off the yoke of the caliphs, and became the residence of an independent sultan. Mauritania followed the same example, and became the empire of Morocco, under its absolute prince. Spain, or at least the kingdom of Cordova, had thrown off its dependence on the caliphs of the race of Abassidæ,

and obeyed a race of princes of the ancient family of the Ommiades. In this state of division, the Saracen power had ceased to be considered as one empire; yet it is to be observed, that all these separate sovereigns continued to respect the caliph of the East as the successor of Mahomet, though they acknowledged to him no temporal subjection.

After the deposition of Charles the Gross, the empire of Charlemagne subsisted only in name. Arnold, or Arnulph, a bastard son of Charlemagne, made himself master of Germany. Italy was divided between Guy, duke of Spoleto, and Berengarius, duke of Friuli, who had received these duchies from Charles the Bald. Arnold considered France to be his property as emperor, but in the meantime it was possessed by Eudes and Charles the Simple. The dukes of Spoleto and Friuli had their pretensions to the empire as well as Arnold; they were both of the blood of Charlemagne. Formosus, who was pope at this time, complaisantly invested them all three in succession with the imperial dignity: in fact, the Roman empire no longer subsisted. The country which obeyed the nominal emperors was but a part of Germany; while France, Italy, Spain, Burgundy, and the countries between the Maese and the Rhine, were possessed by different independent princes. The emperors were tumultuously elected by the bishops, and such of the grandees as were most in power, who were become hereditary princes, and who in reality were more independent than their sovereign.

In speaking of the election of emperors at this period, it is not to be supposed that there was any

limited number of electors, as came afterwards to be the case. A century after the period of which we now treat, we have historical evidence that the election of the emperor was in the people at large; but by what means the sentiments of the people were taken, it is not easy to conceive. Probably each duke, or count, was considered as the organ of the district over which he presided.

After the death of Arnold, his son Louis was chosen emperor of the Romans. He was the last of the blood of Charlemagne; and upon his death Otho, duke of Saxony, by his influence and credit, put the crown upon the head of Conrad, duke of Franconia; on whose death Henry, surnamed "The Fowler," son of the same duke Otho of Saxony, was elected emperor, in the year 918.

The incapacity of preceding emperors, and the disorders occasioned by the vast number of petty princes, who all exercised sovereign authority in their own states, had reduced the empire to extreme weakness. The Hungarians, descendants of the ferocious Huns, committed such depredations, that the emperor Conrad was content to pay an annual tribute to keep them quiet. Henry the Fowler, who was a prince of great abilities and excellent endowments, changed the face of affairs much for the better. His good policy united the disorderly nobles; he vanquished the Hungarians, and freed the empire from the disgraceful tribute which was imposed during the reign of his predecessor. To this prince Germany owes the foundation of her cities; for before this period, excepting the castles on the mountains, the seats of the barbarous nobility who lived by plunder, and the convents, filled

with an useless herd of ecclesiastics, the bulk of the people lived dispersed in lonely farms and villages. The towns built by Henry were surrounded with walls, and regularly fortified: they were capable of containing a considerable number of inhabitants; and, in order that they might be speedily peopled, it was enjoined by the sovereign, that every ninth man should remove himself, with his whole effects, from the country, and settle in the nearest town. In the same spirit of judicious policy, Henry subjected the tilts and tournaments to proper regulations; thus preserving and encouraging an institution which kept alive among his subjects the martial spirit, and that high sense of honour which prompts to deeds of heroism; while he restrained every thing in the practice which savoured of barbarism, or tended to insubordination, by rendering individuals the judges and avengers in their own quarrels. This prince held no correspondence with the see of Rome, he had been consecrated by his own bishops, and during his whole reign Germany seemed to have lost sight of Italy.

Henry the Fowler was succeeded by his son Otho the Great, who again united Italy to the empire, and kept the aspiring popedom in subjection. Otho was, in every respect, the character of the greatest celebrity at this time in Europe. He increased the imperial dominions by the addition of the kingdom of Denmark, or at least rendered that nation for a considerable time tributary to the imperial crown. He annexed Bohemia likewise to the empire; and seems to have assumed to himself a jurisdiction paramount in authority over all the sovereigns of Europe.

Italy, at the accession of Otho the Great, was the scene of crimes equally detestable, and murders as atrocious, as those which stained the annals of the Constantinopolitan empire at the same period. Formosus had been bishop of Porto before he arrived at the popedom, and in that station he had been twice excommunicated by pope John VIII. for rebellion and misdemeanour. Stephen, who succeeded Formosus in the see of Rome, caused his body to be dug up: the corpse was convicted of various crimes, beheaded, and flung into the Tiber. The friends of Formosus, however, conspired against and deposed Stephen, who was afterwards strangled in prison, while the body of Formosus was recovered, embalmed, and interred with all pontifical honours. Sergius III., who, before he arrived at the popedom, had been banished by John IX., a friend of Formosus, no sooner attained the pontifical chair, than he caused this abused carcass to be dug out of the grave a second time, and thrown into the Tiber.

Marozia, the mistress of Sergius III., and her sister Theodora, two women of the most abandoned and flagitious character, now ruled every thing in Rome; and, maintaining their ascendency by the most detestable crimes, and murders without end, they filled the pontifical chair in rapid and monstrous succession with their paramours or their adulterous offspring.

While Rome and the church were thus rent in pieces, Berengarius, duke of Friuli, disputed with Hugh of Arles the sovereignty of Italy. Such was the situation of things when, at the solicitation of most of the Italian cities, and even of the pope himself, Otho the Great was called to the aid of this unfortunate country. He entered Italy,

overcame the duke of Friuli, and was consecrated by the pope, Emperor of the Romans, with the title of Cæsar and Augustus, his holiness himself taking the oath of allegiance to him. Otho hereupon confirmed the donations made to the holy see by Pepin, Charlemagne, and Louis the Débonnaire. John XII. was not long faithful to his engagement of alliance. He entered into a confederacy with the duke of Friuli, invited his son to Rome, and solicited the Hungarians to invade Germany. Otho hastened back to Rome, which he had but recently quitted, called a council, and brought the pope to trial. John was deposed, and Otho again left Rome; but hardly had he taken his departure when John had the address to excite an insurrection of the people, who dethroned his rival Leo VIII., and reinstated him in the pontifical chair. But John did not live to enjoy his triumph: three days after his reinstatement he met the reward of his crimes, and perished by the hand of an indignant husband, who detected him in the arms of his wife. These dissensions again recalled Otho to Rome, where he took an exemplary vengeance on his enemies by hanging half the senate. Such was the state of Rome under Otho the Great; and it continued with little variation under Otho II. and III., under Henry II. and Conrad, surnamed the Salic. Amid these contentions of parties it became a usual practice to adjust the difference by setting the popedom up to public sale, and disposing of it to the highest bidder, and bishoprics and inferior benefices were filled in the same manner. Benedict VIII. and John XIX., two brothers, publicly

bought the popedom, one after another, and on the death of the latter it was purchased in a similar manner for a child of ten years of age, Benedict IX. The emperor Henry III., who was a prince of abilities and authority, resumed to himself the right of filling the pontifical chair, and nominated successively three popes, without any opposition on the part of the church or people of Rome.

CHAPTER V.

History of Britain—Earliest State—Landing of Julius Cæsar—Conquest by the Romans—Abandonment of Britain on the Gothic Invasion of Italy—Irruptions of the Picts and Caledonians—Saxon Invasion—Heptarchy—Union under Egbert—Danish Invasions—Alfred the Great—His Institutions—His Successors—Norman Conquest.

The history of the British Isles has hitherto been postponed, till we should be enabled to consider it in one connected view, from its rudest stage to the end of the Anglo-Saxon government, and the conquest of England by the Normans, which properly constitutes the first period of British history.

The origin of the population of kingdoms is always uncertain. Arguments derived either from a similarity of manners among ancient nations, or from the etymology of local names, and designations of provinces and their inhabitants, are extremely fallacious and inconclusive. Nations the most unconnected, when examined in the same state of society, or at the same period of their progress from barbarism to civilization, will always exhibit a similarity of manners; which, therefore, can never be considered as a proof of their relation to each other: and there is no opinion of the origin of nations, however whimsical or ridiculous, that may not find its support from the versatile and pliable etymology of words. Such specula-

tions fall not within the province of the general historian.

All ancient writers agree in representing the first inhabitants of Britain as a tribe of Gauls; the Romans found among them the same monarchical government, the same religion and language, as among the Celtæ on the continent. They were divided into many small nations or tribes, unconnected with and independent of each other. Tacitus mentions a spirit of independence to have prevailed even among the individuals of each state or nation, which, while it excited frequent factions, prevented the chief or prince from ever attaining the absolute authority of a despot. Their religion was that of the Druids; the uncertainty regarding whose particular tenets is universally acknowledged. It is, however, generally agreed that they taught the belief of one God, Creator of the universe; of the limited duration of the world, and its destruction by fire; of the immortality of the human soul and its transmigration through different bodies, in which the just and the wicked met with a retribution for their conduct in the present state: but on these doctrines as general principles they seemed to have reared an immense superstructure of fable. Their worship was polluted by the horrid practice of human sacrifice; and the chief office of their priests was to divine future events from the flowing of the blood of the victim, or the posture in which he fell after receiving the fatal blow. The influence of this religion was so great as to extend over every department of the government of the Britons. The Druids were not only the priests, but the

judges, civil and criminal; and the bondage in which they held the minds of the people was so strict as to supply the place of laws. The Romans, after the conquest of Gaul, found it impossible to reconcile to their laws and institutions the nations whom they had subdued, while this religion subsisted, and in this instance were obliged to depart from their usual principles of toleration. They abolished the religion of the Druids by the severest penal enactments.*

In this situation were the inhabitants of Britain when Julius Cæsar, after having overcome the Gauls, began to look to the conquest of this island. The natives, conscious of their inability long to resist the Roman arms, endeavoured, before his arrival, to appease him by submissions, which had no effect in altering his purpose. He landed, as is supposed, near to Deal; and, contrary to his expectation, found himself opposed, not by a tumultuous troop of barbarians, but by a regular and well-disciplined army, who attacked him with the most determined courage. Though repulsed, they persevered in repeated attacks on the legions, and, availing themselves of all their local advantages, spun out the campaign till the approach of winter, with very little loss to themselves. Cæsar was soon equally disposed as they to an accommodation; and, after some weeks spent in ineffectual operations, he re-embarked his troops, determined to return with a much greater force. In his second invasion, he brought with him five

* A most elaborate account of the history, manners, learning, and religion of the Druids, is to be found in Henry's "History of Britain," b. i. ch. 4.

legions, making at least 20,000 foot, a competent body of horse, and a fleet of 800 sail.

To resist so formidable an army, the Britons, hitherto disunited under their different princes, entered into a confederacy, appointing Cassibellanus, king of the Trinobantes,* their commander in-chief. They now made a most desperate resistance, and showed all the ability of practised warriors. The contest, however, was in vain; Cæsar gained several advantages; he penetrated into the country, burned the capital of Cassibellanus, the present St. Albans, or Verulamium; deposed that prince, and established his own ally, Mandubratius, upon the throne; and, finally, after compelling the country to articles of submission, he returned again into Gaul.

Britain was for some time rescued from the yoke of the Romans by the civil wars in Italy, which gave sufficient employment at home; and, after the fall of the commonwealth, the first emperors were satisfied with the conquests they had obtained over the liberties of their country: so that the Britons for near a century enjoyed their freedom unmolested.† But in the reign of Claudius the conquest of Britain was seriously determined. Claudius, after paving the way by Plautius, one of his generals, arrived himself in

* The country of the Trinobantes comprehended Middlesex and Essex.—CAMDEN.

† The Britons conciliated the favour of Augustus by sending ambassadors to Rome, from time to time, with presents. These consisted of works in *ivory* (query, whence the material?) bridles, chains, amber, and glass vessels.—STRABO, lib. iv.

the island, and received the submission of the south-east provinces. The rest, under Caractacus, or Caratach, made an obstinate resistance; but were at length subdued by Ostorius Scapula; and Caractacus, as has been already noticed, was defeated, and sent prisoner to Rome; where his magnanimous behaviour procured him a very respectful treatment.*

Yet the island was not subdued. Suetonius Paulinus, under the emperor Nero, was invested with the chief command. He directed his first attempts against the island of Mona, now Anglesey, upon the coast of Wales, which was the centre of the Druidical superstition; and, expelling the Britons from the island, who made a most frantic resistance, he burned many of the Druids, and destroyed their consecrated groves and altars. Having thus triumphed over the religion of the Britons, he thought his future progress would be easy; but he was disappointed in his expectations. The Britons, more exasperated than intimidated, were all in arms, and, headed by Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, had attacked several of the Roman settlements. Suetonius hastened to the protection of London. The Britons, however, reduced it to ashes, massacred the inhabitants that remained in it, putting to death 70,000 of the Romans and their allies. Suetonius revenged these losses by a decisive victory, in which 80,000 Britons fell in the field. Boadicea, to escape slavery, or an ignominious death,

* For a brief narrative of the Roman transactions in Britain prior to the time of Agricola, see Tacitus, Vit. Agri., cap. xiii. &c.

put an end to her own life by poison. Still this success was not attended with the reduction of the island, which was not accomplished till Julius Agricola received the command, and formed a regular plan for the subjugation of Britain. He secured every advantage which he obtained by proper garrisons; and, pushing northward beyond the centre of the island, he fixed a chain of forts between the Friths of Clyde and Forth, which secured the Roman provinces from the incursions of the barbarous inhabitants from the north. He cultivated very successfully, likewise, the arts of peace; and, by degrees, reconciled the southern Britons to the laws and government of the Romans. The Caledonians still defended their barren mountains, which, happily for them, the Romans did not think worth much pains to subdue. Adrian visited Britain, and built a new rampart between the Tyne and the Frith of Solway. The Roman province was consequently, at this time, somewhat retrenched in its limits. It was afterwards extended by the conquests of Antoninus Pius, and Severus, who carried his arms very far into the north. The details of these expeditions, however important to a Briton, exceed the circumscription of general history.*

By the decline and fall of the Roman empire, Britain again recovered her liberty. The legions which defended the island were carried over to the protection of Italy and Gaul, against the

* The reader will find this first period of British history fully and ably illustrated by Camden, "Romans in Britain;" and Chalmers, in his "Caledonia," b. i., the Roman period.

Gothic invaders. The southern Britons did not regain peace by this change, for they were invaded by the Picts and Caledonians; and, so degraded and abased was the national spirit by its subjection to the Roman yoke, that the Britons solicited the protection of Rome against their unconquered neighbours. A trifling assistance was all that the state of the empire could afford. The Romans, as a last good office, assisted them in rebuilding the wall erected by Severus, and, counselling them to arm manfully in their own defence, they bade a final adieu to Britain, about the year 448, after having been masters of a considerable part of the island for nearly four centuries.

The legions had been entirely withdrawn about forty years before this period; and, under the reign of Honorius, Britain was considered an independent country. From that period till the descent of the Saxons in 449, the state of the country, and the nature of the government, can only be matter of conjecture.*

The character of the southern inhabitants of the island appears at this period to have been extremely despicable; they could not avail themselves of the liberty they had gained by the departure of the Romans. The Picts and Caledonians considered the Southern Britons as a people fitted for slavery. They broke down from their mountains with unresisted fury, and carried havoc and devastation along with them. The Britons, instead of vindicating their rights by a magnanimous oppo-

* See a fine visionary picture of it (acknowledged to be such by the historian himself) in Gibbon, c. xxxi. "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

sition, again renewed their abject solicitations to the Romans; but the Goths had given to them too much employment at home to permit their sending aid to a distant and useless province. In this extremity, numbers of the Britons fled across the sea into Gaul, and settled in the province of *Armorica*, which from that time became known by the name of Brittany. It was happy for those who remained, that their enemies, the Picts and Caledonians, had too much of the predatory disposition to think of making complete conquests, of securing what they had won. They were satisfied with ravaging a part of the country, and retired again to their mountains. The Britons, in this interval of peace, behaved as if secure of its continuance. They made no preparations for resisting an enemy, whom they might easily have foreseen they would often have to cope with. A new irruption of the Picts and Caledonians totally disheartened them; and, to complete their shame, they sent a deputation into Germany, to invite the Saxons to come to their assistance and protection.

The Saxons were at this time regarded as one of the most warlike tribes of the ancient Germans. They occupied the sea-coast from the mouth of the Rhine to Jutland; and had made themselves known to the Britons by piratical expeditions on their coasts. They received this embassy with great satisfaction, and, under the command of two brothers, Hengis and Horsa, they landed in the year 450 on the island of Thanet, and immediately marched to the defence of the Britons. The Scots and Picts, unable to resist the valour of these

foreigners, were defeated and compelled to retire to the north. The Saxons, as might have been expected, next turned their thoughts to the entire reduction of the Britons. After various and alternate changes of success, the Saxons, having brought over large reinforcements of their countrymen, finally accomplished the reduction of South Britain. Different parts of the country having been subdued by different leaders, who were each ambitious of independence and absolute authority, the country, even after its final reduction, which was not till above a century and a half* after the first landing of the Saxons, exhibited a broken and divided appearance. Seven distinct provinces were formed into independent kingdoms!

The history of the SAXON HEPTARCHY is extremely obscure. The duration of the several kingdoms till their union under Egbert is almost all that can be noted with any approach to historical certainty.

The kingdom of Kent began in the year 455, under Escus the son of Hengist, and, during the reigns of seventeen princes, lasted till the year 827, when it was subdued by the West Saxons. Under Ethelbert, one of the Kentish kings, the Saxons were converted to Christianity. Pope Gregory the Great sent over into Britain the monk Augustine, with forty associates, who very effectually propagated the doctrines of Christianity by their

* It is in this period that is placed the reign of King Arthur, prince of the Silures, who achieved many victories over the Saxons, and, having signally routed them in the battle of Badenhill, fought A. D. 520, secured the tranquillity of his people for above forty years.

eloquence and the exemplary purity of their morals.

The second kingdom of the Heptarchy is that of Northumberland, which began in the year 547, and lasted, under twenty-three princes, till the year 926. The third was that of East Anglia, which began A. D. 575, and in which, before its union in 928, there reigned fifteen successive princes. The fourth, Mercia, the largest and most powerful of the Heptarchy, comprehended all the middle counties of England. It subsisted from the year 582 to the year 827. The fifth kingdom of the Heptarchy was that of Essex, of which, before its union, there were fourteen princes. Of Sussex, which was the sixth kingdom of the Heptarchy, there were only five princes before it was finally reduced. The seventh, which ultimately subdued and united the whole kingdoms of the Heptarchy, was that of Wessex or the West Saxons. It began in the year 519, and had not subsisted above eighty years, when one of its princes conquered the kingdom of Sussex and annexed it to his dominions.

In the kingdoms of the Heptarchy there was no exact rule or order of succession; and the reigning chief, considering all the princes of his family as his rivals, was seldom at ease till he had secured himself by putting them to death; hence, and from another cause, which was the passion for monastic life, the royal families were entirely extinguished in all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and Egbert, prince of the West Saxons, remained at last the sole surviving descendant of the Saxon conquerors who subdued Britain. These

were favourable circumstances for the ambition of Egbert, and naturally incited him to attempt the conquest of the whole Heptarchy. The Mercians were at that time the greatest and most powerful of these petty kingdoms, and held Kent and East Anglia as tributary states. Some intestine differences facilitated the conquest, and Egbert, after several desperate engagements, reduced them entirely under his authority. Essex was subdued with equal facility. Sussex, we have before remarked, had been very early added to the dominion of the West Saxons. The East Angles submitted of themselves, and craved the protection of the victorious Egbert; and the Northumbrians soon after followed their example.

Thus the whole kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy were united into one great state, nearly 400 years after the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, by the victorious arms and judicious policy of Egbert. This great event, which is properly the foundation of the kingdom of England, took place in the year 827.

England, thus united, was soothing herself with the prospect of peace and tranquillity, which during the contentions of the Heptarchy she had never enjoyed; but this happiness was yet at a distance. The Normans, whose devastations had rendered them formidable to the continental kingdoms, now began to show themselves on the coast of England, where they were known by the name of Danes. Their first landing had taken place in the year 787, in the kingdom of Wessex. From that time, for several centuries, England was never free from the ravages of these barbarians; whose

invasions became from time to time more formidable, according as resistance exasperated them, or the hopes of plunder allured fresh bands of their countrymen to join in their expeditions.

Under Alfred, the grandson of Egbert, England, from this source alone, was reduced to the lowest extremity. This prince, whose singular endowments of mind were united to great heroism and courage, had for some years, with various success, made the most vigorous efforts to free his country from the scourge of the Danes. In one year he engaged them in eight battles; and while he flattered himself that he had reduced them to extremity, a new torrent poured in upon the coast, which obliged him to offer proposals of peace. These, though agreed to by the Danes, were not fulfilled; they still continued their depredations, and the Saxons were reduced to such despair, that many left their country, fled into the mountains of Wales, or escaped beyond sea. Alfred himself was obliged to relinquish his crown. He concealed himself in the habit of a peasant, and lived for some time in the house of a neat-herd. Collecting afterwards a few followers, he betook himself to a small retreat in Somersetshire, surrounded by forests and morasses; where he lay concealed for the space of a year, till the news of a prosperous event called him again into the field.

A chief of Devonshire, a man of great spirit and valour, had, with a handful of his followers, routed a large party of Danes, and taken a consecrated or enchanted standard, in which they reposed the utmost confidence. Alfred, observing this symptom of reviving spirit in his subjects,

left his retreat; but before having recourse to arms, he resolved to inspect himself the situation of the enemy. Assuming the disguise of a harper, he passed without suspicion into the Danish camp, where his music and drollery obtained him so favourable a reception, that he was kept there for several days, and even lodged in the tent of their prince. Here, having remarked their careless security, their contempt of the English, and their own real weakness, he immediately, by private emissaries, summoned a rendezvous of the bravest of the Saxon nobles, inviting them to appear at Bricton, on the borders of Selwood forest, attended by all their followers. Thither they accordingly resorted in very great numbers. The English beheld with rapture their beloved monarch, whom, from his long absence, they had accounted dead. They were impatient to march under his banner, and Alfred led them immediately to the attack. Their enemies, the Danes, surprised at the sight of a foe whom they looked upon as entirely subdued, made a very feeble resistance, and were put to flight with great slaughter. The English might have entirely cut them to pieces; but the generosity of Alfred inclined him rather to spare and incorporate them with his subjects. He allowed them to settle in the provinces of East Anglia and Northumberland, which the late ravages had almost depopulated, and the Danes, embracing the Christian religion, were united with the English. The more turbulent of them found opportunity to escape beyond sea, where, under the command of Hastings, a notorious plunderer, they prepared themselves for fresh depredations.

Alfred employed this interval of tranquillity in restoring order to the state; in establishing civil and military institutions, and chiefly in equipping a respectable fleet, which had been hitherto totally neglected by the English. These precautions were extremely necessary, for the Danes attempted more than once a new invasion, and committed the most destructive ravages. At length, after a very complete defeat, and a most exemplary severity, which Alfred now found it necessary to adopt with those whom he took prisoners, these northern pirates suspended for several years their predatory visits to Britain.

England now enjoyed full tranquillity under this excellent prince; and Alfred saw his kingdom in the possession of every happiness which could flow from the salutary laws and institutions which he had established; when he died in the vigour of his age, after a glorious reign of nearly thirty years.

Alfred, whether we view him in his public or private character, deserved to be esteemed one of the best and greatest of princes. He united the most enterprising and heroic spirit with the greatest prudence and moderation; the utmost vigour of authority with perfect affability and a most winning deportment; the most exemplary justice with the greatest lenity. His civil talents were in every respect equal to his military virtues. He found the kingdom in the most miserable condition to which anarchy, domestic barbarism, and foreign hostility could reduce it; by the valour of his arms, and by his abilities as a politician and lawgiver, he brought it to a pitch of eminence and

glory, which, till then, England had never attained. The outlines of his admirable plan of political economy merit particular attention, as being, in fact, the foundation of the venerable system of the British Constitution.

Alfred divided all England into counties; these he subdivided into hundreds; and the hundreds again into tithings. Ten neighbouring householders formed a tithing, a fribourg, or decennary, over which one man was appointed to preside, called a tithing-man or borgholder.* Every householder was answerable for the conduct of his family, and the borgholder for the conduct of all within his district. Every man was punished as an outlaw who did not register himself in some tithing; and none could change their habitation without a warrant from the tithing-man or borgholder. When any person was accused of a crime, the borgholder was summoned to answer for him; if he declined to become his security, the criminal was committed to prison till trial. If he escaped before trial, the borgholder was subjected to a penalty.

The borgholder, in deciding disputes or small lawsuits, summoned his whole decennary or tithing to assist him. In matters of greater importance, in appeals from the decennary, or in contro-

*. Borgh, in the Saxon language, according to Spelman, signifies a pledge or security. In these small communities or neighbourhoods, every man was security for the conduct of his neighbour, and hence the origin of the word *neighbour*, quasi Nigh Borgh, or near pledge. Jamieson assigns a different etymology, viz. *Nahgibur*, Germ. from *nach*, near, and *gibur*, inhabitant.—*Etymol. Dict.*, voce *Nichbour*.

versies arising between members of different decennaries, the cause was brought before the hundred, which consisted of ten decennaries, or one hundred families of freemen; and which was regularly assembled every four weeks for the deciding of causes. Their method of deciding deserves particularly to be noticed, as being the origin of juries, that inestimable privilege of Britons. Twelve freeholders were chosen, who, having sworn, together with the presiding magistrate of the hundred, to administer impartial justice, proceeded to the determination of the cause. Besides those monthly meetings of the hundred, there was an annual meeting appointed for the regulation of the police of the district, and for the correction of abuses in magistrates. The people, like their ancestors, the ancient Germans, assembled in arms, whence the hundred was sometimes called a *wapentake;* and these meetings thus served both for the support of military discipline, and for the administration of justice.

Superior to the court of the hundred was the county court, which met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Easter, and consisted of all the freeholders of the county. The bishop and aldermen presided in this court, and their business was to receive appeals from the hundreds and decennaries, and decide disputes between the inhabitants of different hundreds. The alderman formerly possessed both the civil and military authority; but Alfred, judging properly that this gave too much power to the nobility, appointed a sheriff in each county, who enjoyed a like authority

with the alderman in his judicial powers. His office was likewise to guard the rights of the crown, and to levy the fines imposed, which at that time formed a very considerable part of the public revenue.

An appeal lay from all these courts to the king himself, in council; and Alfred, in whom his subjects deservedly placed the highest confidence, was overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of the kingdom. The only remedy for this was to reform the ignorance and restrain the corruption of the inferior magistrates, from whence it arose. Alfred, therefore, was solicitous to appoint the ablest and the most upright of his nobility to exercise the office of sheriffs and earls. He punished many for malversation, and he took care to enforce the study of letters, and particularly of the laws, as indispensable to their continuing in office.

Alfred likewise framed a body of laws, which, though now lost, is generally supposed to be the origin of what is termed the common law of England. The institutions of this prince will bring to mind many of the political regulations of Charlemagne, which have been described at some length, and to which those of The Great Alfred bear a very near resemblance.

This excellent prince wisely considered the cultivation of letters as the most effectual means of thoroughly eradicating barbarous dispositions. The ravages of the Danes had totally extinguished all sparks of learning, by the dispersion of the monks, and the burning their monasteries and

libraries. To repair these misfortunes, Alfred, like Charlemagne, invited learned men from all quarters of Europe to reside in his dominions. He established schools, and enjoined every freeholder possessed of two ploughs to send his children there for instruction. He is said to have founded, or, at least, to have liberally endowed, the illustrious seminary afterwards known as the University of Oxford.

His own example was the most effectual encouragement to the promotion of a literary spirit. Alfred was himself, for that age, a most accomplished scholar, and, considering the necessary toils and constant active employment, it is surprising how much he employed himself in the pursuits of literature. He is said to have divided his time into three equal parts:—one was allotted to the despatch of the business of government; another to diet, exercise, and sleep; and a third to study and devotion.* By this admirable regularity of life, he found means, notwithstanding his constant wars, and the care of entirely new-modelling and civilizing his kingdom, to compose a variety of ingenious and learned works. He wrote many beautiful apologues and stories in poetry of a moral tendency. He translated the histories of Bede and Orozius, with the treatise of Boethius, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ." Alfred, in short, in every view of his character, must be regarded as one of

* Leland, in his "Collectan," (cura Hearne, tom. i. 259,) mentions his manner of reckoning time by a candle marked with twenty-four divisions, which always burnt in his study.

the wisest and best of men that ever occupied the throne of any nation.*

The most complete system of policy which human wisdom can devise must be ineffectual under weak governors and magistrates. The admirable institutions of Alfred were but partially and feebly enforced under his successors; and England, still a prey to the ravages of the Danes, and to intestine disorders, relapsed again into confusion and barbarism.

Edward, the son and successor of Alfred, whose military talents bore some resemblance to those of his father, had no share of his political genius. He fought his battles with intrepidity; but unable to take advantage of circumstances, or to secure the order and force of government by a well-regulated administration, his reign was one continued scene of war and tumult, as were those of his successors, Athelstan, Edmund, and Edred. In the reign of the latter prince, the priesthood began first to extend its influence over the minds of the English monarchs, and to concern itself no less in temporal affairs than in spiritual. Dunstan, a fanatical bigot, but sufficiently awake to his own interest and that of the church, ruled everything under Edred, and under his successors Edwy, Edgar, and Edward the Martyr.

Under Ethelred, the successor of Edward, a youth of despicable talents, the Danes began seriously to project the conquest of England. Conducted by Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olaus,

* The character of Alfred is admirably described by Carte, Hist. of Eng., vol. i. b. 4, § 18.

king of Norway, they made a formidable descent upon the island, and, after various successes, compelled the dastardly Ethelred repeatedly to purchase a peace, which they as constantly violated. Ethelred indeed furnished them with strong causes. In the spirit of the weakest and most treacherous policy, he attempted to cut off, by a general massacre, all the Danes that had established themselves in the island. This produced, as might have been anticipated, the redoubled vengeance of their countrymen. At length the English nobility, ashamed of their prince, and seeing no other relief to the kingdom from its miseries, swore allegiance to Sweyn the Danish monarch; and Ethelred fled into Normandy, where he found protection from Richard, the grandson of the great Rollo, who, as we have already seen, first established his northern followers in that part of France.

Ethelred, upon the death of Sweyn, who did not long enjoy his new dominions, endeavoured to regain his kingdom; but he found in Canute, the son of Sweyn, a prince determined to make good his father's rights. The inglorious Ethelred died soon after, and left his empty title to his son Edmund, surnamed *Ironside;* who possessed indeed courage and ability to have preserved his country from sinking into such calamities, but wanted talents to raise it from that abyss into which it had already fallen. After several desperate but unsuccessful engagements, he was compelled by his nobility, who urged it as the only means of saving the kingdom, to come to an accommodation with Ca-

nute, and to divide the dominions of England by treaty. The Danish prince got Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumberland; and the southern provinces were left to Edmund. But this prince survived the treaty only a few months. He was murdered at Oxford by a conspiracy of the Danes, who thus made way for the succession of their monarch Canute to the throne of all England.

Edmund Ironside had left two sons, Edwin and Edward; the first measure of Canute was to seize these two princes, whom he sent abroad, to his ally the king of Sweden, with a request that, as soon as they arrived at his court, they might be put to death. Humanity induced the Swedish monarch to spare their lives; he sent them into Hungary, where Solyman, the Hungarian king, gave his sister in marriage to Edwin the elder prince, and his sister-in-law to Edward. Of this last marriage were born two children, Edgar Atheling, and Margaret, afterwards spouse to Malcolm Canmore, king of Scotland.

Canute, from the extent of his dominions, was one of the greatest monarchs of the age. He was sovereign of Denmark, Norway, and England. His character, as king of England, was not uniform. He was, in the first years of his reign, detested by his subjects, whom he loaded with the heaviest taxes, and exasperated by numberless acts of violence and oppression. In his latter years, his administration was mild and equitable, and he courted, in a particular manner, the favour of the church by munificent donations and en-

dowments of monasteries.* He sustained the glory of his kingdom by compelling Malcolm Canmore to do homage for his possession of Cumberland, which that high-spirited prince had refused to submit to.

Canute left three sons:—the eldest, Sweyn, was crowned king of Norway; the youngest, Hardiknute, was in possession of Denmark, and claimed right to England, in virtue of a prior destination of his father, who afterwards altered his will, and left that kingdom to his immediate elder brother Harold. A civil war would have ensued between these princes had not the English nobility interfered, and prompted a division of the kingdom. Harold, it was agreed, should have all the provinces north of the Thames, while Hardiknute should possess all to the south.† Emma, widow of Canute, and mother of Hardiknute, had two sons by her former marriage with Ethelred. These princes, Edward and Alfred, had been brought up in Normandy, where their uncle, Robert, duke of Normandy, protected them against the resentment and jealousy of Canute. Harold wished to prosecute his father's purpose of extinguishing

* "In the latter part of his life, to atone for his many acts of violence, he built churches, endowed monasteries, and imported relics; and had, indeed, a much better title to saintship than many of those who adorn the Roman calendar. He commissioned an agent at Rome to purchase St. Augustine's arm for one hundred talents of silver, a much greater sum than the finest statue of antiquity would then have sold for."—GRAINGER's *Biog. Hist.* Class i.

† Carte, Hist. of Eng., vol. i. b. iv. § 31.

the Saxon blood in the posterity of Ethelred. Alfred, one of the princes, was invited to London, with many professions of regard. But Harold had given orders to surprise and murder his attendants, and the prince was led prisoner to a monastery, where he soon after died. Edward, hearing of his brother's fate, fled back into Normandy. Harold did not long enjoy the fruits of his crime, for he died in the fourth year of his reign; and Hardiknute, king of Denmark, betaking himself to England, was acknowledged sovereign of the whole kingdom, without opposition. After a violent administration of two years he died, to the great comfort of his subjects, who now seized the opportunity of entirely shaking off the Danish yoke. The posterity of Edmund Ironside, Edgar Atheling and his sister Margaret, were the true heirs of the Saxon family; but their absence in Hungary appeared to the English a sufficient reason for giving a preference to Edward, the son of Ethelred, who was fortunately in the kingdom, and the Danes made no attempt to resist the voice of the nation.

Edward, surnamed the Confessor, mounted the throne with the affections of his subjects. He was a mild, but a weak and pusillanimous prince. From his education in Normandy he had contracted a strong relish for the manners of that people, many of whom attended him into England, and were his particular favourites. His reign was embroiled by the turbulent and factious spirit of Godwin, earl of Wessex, and governor of Kent and Sussex. This nobleman, grounding his hopes upon his extensive authority and wealth, and the

imbecility of his sovereign, very early conceived a plan for subverting the government, and assuming absolute power. He attempted an open rebellion in the kingdom, which Edward found no other means of quelling than by coming to an accommodation with the traitor. Godwin died in the interim, and his son Harold, an enterprising youth, while he affected a modest and complying disposition to his sovereign, concealed the same ambitious views. He secured the affections of the nobility, united them to his interests, and, succeeding to the immense possessions of his father, he was soon in a condition to make his pretensions formidable to Edward. This prince, then in the decline of life, would willingly have settled his dominions on his nephew Edgar Atheling, the only remaining branch of the Saxon line, but the imbecility of this young man, he foresaw, would never make good his right against the pretensions of one so popular as Harold, whose views clearly aimed at sovereign power. It appeared to Edward more advisable to nominate for his successor William, duke of Normandy, a prince whose power, reputation, and great abilities, were sufficient to support any destination which he might make in his favour.*

This celebrated prince was the natural son of Robert, duke of Normandy, by the daughter of a furrier of Falaise. Illegitimacy, in those days, was accounted no stain, and his father left him, while yet a minor, heir to his whole dominions. He had to struggle with an arrogant nobility, several

* Carte, vol. i. b. iv. § 39.

of whom even advanced claims to his crown; but he very early showed a genius capable of asserting and vindicating his rights, and soon became the terror both of his rebellious subjects and of foreign invaders. He reduced his patrimonial dominions to the most implicit obedience; and through the whole of his life he seems to have regarded it as a fixed maxim, that inflexible rigour of conduct was the first duty and the wisest policy of a sovereign.

William paid a visit to England; and Edward, receiving him with all the regard due to the relationship that subsisted between them, and to the character of so celebrated a prince, gave him to understand that he intended him for his successor. His return to Normandy, however, gave the ambitious Harold an opportunity for the prosecution of his schemes. He continued to extend his influence among the nobility, by the most insinuating address, and it is not improbable that the rigid severity of the character of William, to which the manners of Harold formed so strong a contrast, contributed to the success of his pretensions.

Edward died in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, and Harold had so well prepared matters that he took possession of the throne with as little disturbance as if he had succeeded by the most undisputed title.

Thus ended the line of the Saxon monarchs in England. The Duke of Normandy, on receiving intelligence of the accession of Harold, resolved to assert his claims in the most effectual manner. He used the formality of first summoning that prince to resign his possession of the kingdom,

but his summons was answered by a spirited declaration from Harold, that he would defend his right with the last drop of his blood. The preparations made by William for an invasion of England occupied a considerable length of time, and were proportionally formidable. The fame of so great an enterprise, in an age of adventure, excited many of the nobility throughout the different kingdoms of Europe to repair with their followers to his standard. The counts of Anjou and Flanders encouraged their subjects to engage in the expedition, and even the court of France, though evidently contrary to its interest to contribute to the aggrandizement of so dangerous a vassal, increased the levies of William with many of the chief nobility of the kingdom. Harold Halfager, king of Norway, undertook to favour the expedition, by making a landing with a formidable army in one quarter, while William invaded the island in another. The emperor Henry IV. of Germany engaged to protect the dominions of Normandy in the absence of its prince; and the pope, Alexander II., gave his sanction to the enterprise, by pronouncing Harold an usurper, and directing a sentence of excommunication against all who should adhere to his interest.

William had now assembled an army of 60,000 men, of whom 50,000 were cavalry; and a fleet amounting, it is said, to 3000 vessels great and small. The attack was begun by the Norwegian army under Halfager, who entered the Humber with 300 sail. The Norwegians, in the first engagement, defeated and put to flight an English army under Morcar, earl of Northumberland, and

Edwin, earl of Mercia, the brothers-in-law of Harold, who, in the meantime, collecting a formidable force, revenged this loss by the total rout and dispersion of the army of Halfager. This victory, though honourable to Harold, was the immediate cause of his ruin; he lost many of his bravest officers in the action, and disgusted the rest by refusing to distribute the Norwegian spoils among them.

William the Norman had, in the meantime, landed at Pevensey on the coast of Sussex. The best politicians of the court of Harold endeavoured to dissuade that prince from hazarding an immediate action. It would have been unquestionably his wisest plan to have waited the relaxation of the first ardour of the Normans; to have harassed them by skirmishes, and cut off their provisions, which, in the end, must in all probability have given the English a complete victory. But the ardour of Harold could not brook delay; he hastened with impetuosity to a general engagement, on which depended the fate of his kingdom; and in the memorable battle of Hastings, which was fought (October 14, 1066) on both sides with desperate courage from the morning till the setting of the sun, the death of Harold, and the total discomfiture of his army, after some ineffectual struggles of further resistance, placed William, duke of Normandy, in possession of the throne of England.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Government, Laws, and Manners of the Anglo-Saxons.

The period of British history to which we are now arrived may be properly concluded by some reflections on the government and manners of the Anglo-Saxons, as there are several particulars in the structure of that government, and in the policy of this ancient people, which are supposed to have had their influence on the British constitution, such as we find it at present, and are topics from which speculative men and political writers have not unfrequently drawn conclusions applicable to our own times, and the present system of government.

The Saxons, who enjoyed the same liberty with all the ancient Germans, retained that political freedom in their new settlements to which they had been accustomed in their own country. Their kings, who were no more than the *chiefs* of a clan or tribe, possessed no greater authority than what is commonly annexed to that character in all barbarous nations. The chief, or king, was the first among the citizens, but his authority depended more on his personal abilities than on his rank. "He was even so far considered as on a level with the people, that a stated price was fixed on his head, and a legal fine was levied on his murderer; which, although proportioned to

his station, and superior to that paid for the life of a subject, was a sensible mark of his subordination to the community."*

A people in this period of society, it is not to be imagined would be very strict in maintaining a regular succession of their princes. Although the family of the prince had its respect and acknowledged superiority, there was no rule steadily observed with regard to succession to the throne, which was generally regulated by present convenience, always paying the first attention to the progeny of the last monarch, if any of them was of age and capacity for government. In the case of minors, the succession generally took a collateral turn; an uncle was promoted to the government, and, having children himself, the sceptre, at his demise, often went to his descendants, to the exclusion of the elder line. All these changes, however, required the concurrence, or, at least, the tacit acquiescence of the people. Thus the monarchies were not, strictly speaking, either *elective* or *hereditary;* and though, in some instances, the destination of a prince was followed in the choice of his successor, they can as little be regarded as properly testamentary. The suffrages of the states sometimes conferred the crown, but they more frequently recognized the person whom they found established, provided he was of the blood-royal. Our knowledge of the *Anglo-Saxon* history and antiquities, though much the subject of research, disquisition, and controversy, is,

* Hume, Appendix I., of which the following account of the Anglo-Saxon government is an abridgment.

after all, too imperfect to afford us means of determining, with any certainty, the prerogatives of the crown and privileges of the people, or of giving any accurate delineation of their government. This uncertainty must result, in a great measure, from their political system being actually various in the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy; and, likewise, from its undergoing changes and alterations during the course of six centuries, from the *Saxon invasion to the Norman conquest.*

One great feature, common to all the kingdoms of the *Heptarchy*, we know, was the *national* council, called the *Wittenagemot*, or assembly of the wise men, whose consent was requisite for enacting laws, and for ratifying the chief acts of public administration. The preambles to all the laws of the Saxon monarchs still remaining, leave no doubt as to the existence of this council; but who were its constituent members is a matter of considerable uncertainty. The *bishops* and *abbots* were unquestionably an essential part; and it is as certain that this supreme court regulated both ecclesiastical and civil matters. It likewise appears that the *aldermen*, or (what was a synonymous term) the *earls* and governors of counties, had a seat in this assembly; but the doubt is, whether the commons had any place there, or who were those *wites*, or wise men, who are mentioned as discriminated from the prelates and from the nobility. This is a point which the factions of modern times have chosen to take up and dispute with as much acrimony as if it materially interested us under the present constitution, to

settle with precision what it was a thousand years ago. The monarchical party affirm that these *wites*, or wise men, were judges, or men learned in the laws. The advocates for the rights of the people hold them to have been the representatives of boroughs, or what we now call Commons. Perhaps the truth lies between these opinions. As the idea of representation is too refined for a very rude system of government, the most rational opinion seems to be, that the *wites*, or *sapientes*, were such men of fortune, landholders, as fell neither under the denomination of clergy nor nobility, but whose weight and consequence was such as to entitle them, without any election, to compeer at the assembly of the states, and to assist at their deliberations. Whether there was any requisite extent of land, that was understood to bestow this qualification, is altogether uncertain.

One thing undoubted, with regard to the Anglo-Saxon government, is that it was extremely aristocratical. The royal authority was very limited; the people as a body were of little weight or consideration. After the abolition of the Heptarchy, the noblemen, who resided at a distance in the provinces, where the inspection and influence of the king would but very imperfectly extend itself, must naturally have acquired almost the whole power and authority. The great offices, too, which they enjoyed became, in a manner, hereditary in their families; and the command of the military force of the province, which it was necessary to give them, from the continual danger of foreign invasion from the Danes, would

naturally very much increase the power of the nobles. Another circumstance, productive of the same consequence, was the imperfection of the administration under a ferocious and military people, which contributed much to introduce that strong connexion of clientship which we find subsisting in all nations in a similar state of society. Even the inhabitants of towns placed themselves under the protection of some particular nobleman, and, feeling the ties of that connexion more strongly than any other, were accustomed to look up to his patronage as that of a sovereign. The laws even favoured these ideas. A client, though a freeman, was supposed so much to belong to his patron, that his murderer was obliged to pay a fine to the latter, as a compensation for his loss, in like manner as he paid a fine to the master for the murder of a slave. Many of the inferior rank of citizens entered into associations, and subscribed a bond, obliging themselves to be faithful to each other in all cases of danger to any one of the confederates; to protect his person, to revenge his wrongs, to pay the fines which he might incur through accident, and to contribute to his funeral charges. This last practice, as well as the connexion of client and patron, are strong proofs of the imperfection of laws, and of a weak administration. Only to remedy such evils would men have recurred to these connexions and associations.

The Saxons were divided, as all the other German nations, into *three* ranks of men, the *noble* the *free*, and the *slaves*. The nobles were called *thanes*, and these were of two kinds—the *king's*

thanes and the *lesser thanes*. The latter seem to have been dependent on the former, and to have received lands, for which they either paid rent or military services. There were two laws of the Anglo-Saxons, which breathe a spirit very different from what one would naturally expect from the character of the age, when the distinction of superior and inferior is commonly very strongly marked. One of the laws of Athelstan declared, that a merchant who had made three long sea voyages on his own account was entitled to the quality of thane; and another declared that a *ceorle*, or husbandman, who had been able to purchase five hides of land, or five plough-gates, and who had a chapel, a kitchen, a hall and a bell, was entitled to the same rank. The freemen of the lower rank, who were denominated *ceorles*, cultivated the farms of the thanes, for which they paid rent, and they appear to have been removable at the pleasure of the thane.

The lowest and most numerous of the orders was that of the slaves or *villains;* of these slaves there were two kinds, the household slaves and those employed in the cultivation of the lands; of the latter species are the serfs, which we find at this day in Poland, in Russia, and in others of the northern states. A master had not, among the Anglo-Saxons, an unlimited power over his slaves. He was fined for the murder of a slave, and if he mutilated one, the slave recovered his liberty.

The laws of Edgar inform us that slavery was the lot of all prisoners taken in war. From the continual wars that subsisted, first between the

Saxons and Britons, and afterwards between the several kingdoms of the Heptarchy, this class of men could not have failed to be numerous.

Though the Anglo-Saxon government seems upon the whole to have been extremely aristocratical, there were still some considerable remains of the ancient democracy of the Germans. The courts of the Decennary, the Hundred, and the County, were well calculated to defend general liberty, and to restrain the power of the nobility. In the county courts, or *shire-motes*, the freeholders were convened twice a year, and received appeals from the inferior courts. The cause was determined by a majority of voices; and the bishop and alderman, who sat as presidents, had no more to do than to collect the suffrages and deliver their own opinion. An appeal lay from all the courts to the king, but this was not practised unless in matters of importance. The alderman received a third of the fines that were levied in these courts, and the remaining two-thirds went to the king, which formed no inconsiderable part of the crown's revenue. As writing was little practised in those ages, the most remarkable civil transactions were finished in presence of these courts; such as the promulgation of testaments, the manumission of slaves, and the concluding of all important bargains and contracts.

The punishments inflicted by the Anglo-Saxon courts of judicature, and the methods of proof employed in causes, were much the same as we have remarked among the other barbarous nations of northern origin. The pecuniary fines for every species of crime, and the modes of proof

by the judgment of God, by the ordeal of fire or water, by single combat, or by producing a certain number of evidences named *compurgators*, who swore that they believed the person spoke the truth;—all these we have observed to have been common to the Germanic nations, and to those of Scandinavian origin, except, as we have before remarked, the Visigoths and Ostrogoths.

As to the military force of the nation during the government of the Saxons, we know that the expense and burthen of defending the state lay equally upon all the land: and it was usual for every five hides, or ploughs, to furnish one man for the service.* The ceorles, or husbandmen, were provided with arms, and obliged to take their turn in military duty. There were computed to be 243,600 hides in England: consequently the military force of the kingdom consisted of 48,720 men, though, upon extraordinary occasions, there is no doubt that a greater number might be assembled.

The king's revenue consisted partly in his *demesnes*—which were extensive—partly in the tolls and imposts on boroughs and seaports, and a share of the fines imposed by the courts of Judicature. The *Dane-gelt*, which is often mentioned, was a land-tax imposed by the state, either for the

* The hide of land has been generally supposed equal to two hundred acres; but, from the use of the word in Domesday Book, there is reason to believe that the hide was no certain measure of land, but as much land as, according to its quality, was supposed to be of a certain value. This value, there is room to think, was about twenty Norman shillings.

payment of sums exacted by the Danes, or for the defence of the kingdom against them.

The law of succession among the Anglo-Saxons was, that the land was equally divided among all the male children of the deceased, which was called the custom of *Gavel-kinds*. Lands were chiefly of two kinds, *Book land*—or what was held by charter or book, which was regarded complete property; or *Folk land*—what was held by tenants removable at the pleasure of the proprietors.

Upon the whole, the Anglo-Saxons seem to have been a rude, unlettered, uncivilized people, among whom laws, of themselves imperfect, had yet more imperfect and limited influence. Their national character merits little other praise than that of hardiness and courage, which too often degenerated into ferocity. They were unquestionably behind the *Normans* in every point of civilization, and the conquest was to them a real advantage, as it put them in a situation to receive slowly the seeds of cultivation, and some knowledge in the arts and sciences, of which, till then, they were almost totally ignorant.

CHAPTER VII.

State of Europe during the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Centuries.

France, which, under the splendid dominion of Charlemagne, had revived the western empire of the Romans, and rivalled, in extent of territory and power, the proudest times of ancient Rome, had dwindled down, under the weak posterity of this prince, even to the point of sustaining a diminution of her proper territory. At the time of the elevation of Hugh Capet, the founder of the third race of her kings, France comprehended neither Normandy, Dauphiny, nor Provençe. On the death of Louis V., surnamed Fainéant, or the Idle, his uncle Charles, duke of Brabant and Hainault, if the rules of succession to the throne had been observed, or the posterity of Charlemagne respected, ought to have succeeded to the crown of France; but Hugh Capet, count of Paris and lord of Picardy and Campagne, the most powerful and the most ambitious of the French nobles, whose great-grandfather Eudes, or Odo, and grandfather Robert the Strong, both sat on the throne of France, by usurping the right of Charles the Simple, availing himself of these pretensions, and assembling his forces, dispersed a parliament summoned for investing his rival, the duke of Brabant, with the ensigns of royalty, and was elected sovereign of the kingdom by the voice of his

brother peers. Charles of Brabant was betrayed by the bishop of Laon, and given up to Hugh Capet, who allowed him to die in prison.

Thus the posterity of Charlemagne being utterly extinct, Hugh Capet is the founder of the third, or Capetian race of monarchs, who, from the year 987 down to the present age, have swayed the sceptre of France for more than eight hundred years: an instance of uninterrupted succession in a royal family which is unexampled in the history of mankind. France, divided into parties, continued in a state of weakness and domestic misery during the reign of Hugh Capet and his successor Robert, whose reign affords no event worthy of record, unless a most audacious exertion of the authority of the pope over the sovereignty of France. King Robert had married Bertha, his cousin in the fourth degree—a marriage which, though within the prohibitions of the canon law, was, in every respect, a wise and politic connexion, as it united the contending factions in the kingdom. Although in catholic countries, even at this day, private persons can easily purchase a dispensation from the pope for such matches, the French king met with no such indulgence. Gregory V., in the most insolent manner, dared to impose on king Robert a penance of seven years, ordered him to quit his wife, and excommunicated him in case of refusal. The emperor Otho III., who was Robert's enemy, gave this decree sanction by his presence at the council where it was pronounced, which makes it probable that this shameful procedure had its origin more in political reasons than in a religious motive. Be that as it may, the effect of this

sentence of excommunication was very serious to Robert; the unhappy prince was abandoned by all his courtiers, and even his domestics. Historians inform us, that two only of his servants remained with him, whose care was to throw into the fire what he left at his meals, from the horror they felt at what had been touched by an excommunicated person. This absurdity is scarcely credible, and ought, perhaps, to be ranked along with another circumstance, likewise recorded of this event—which is, that the queen, in punishment of this pretended incest, was brought to bed of a monster. Voltaire well remarks, that there was nothing monstrous in this whole affair, except the bold assurance of the pope, and the weakness of the king, who, to obey him, separated from his wife. The piety of king Robert's character was signalized by his laying the foundation of that superb structure, the church of Notre Dame at Paris, one of the noblest Gothic edifices in the world.*

The subserviency of this monarch to the domineering spirit of the popedom had its natural effect in exciting the holy fathers to further exercises of authority. Robert had been excommunicated for marrying his relation; and his grandson, Philip I., was excommunicated for divorcing a lady who was his relation, to make way for a

* The president Hénault informs us that this church was built on the foundation of an ancient temple of Jupiter. If this is true, it has been the peculiar lot of this edifice to have seen, in the modern times, the revival of its ancient worship, and to have been dedicated once more, in the course of a mad revolution, to the gods and goddesses of paganism.

mistress. Of all the superstitions of these times, it was not the least prejudicial to the welfare of states, that the marriage of relations, even to the seventh degree, was prohibited by the church. Henry, the father of Philip I. of France, to whom almost all the sovereigns of Europe were related, was obliged to seek a wife from the barbarous empire of Russia.

The prevailing passion of the times of which we now treat was a taste for pilgrimages and adventures. Some Normans, having been in Palestine about the year 983, passed, at their return, by the sea of Naples, into the principality of Salerno, in Italy, which had been usurped by the lords of this small territory from the emperors of Constantinople. The Normans found the prince of Salerno besieged by the Mahometans, and relieved him by raising the siege. They were dismissed loaded with presents, which encouraged others of their countrymen to go in quest of similar adventures. A troop of Normans went, in the year 1016, to offer their services to Benedict VIII., against the Mahometans; others went to Apulia, to serve the duke of Capua; a third band armed first against the Greeks, and then against the popes, always selling their services to those that best paid for them. William, surnamed Fier-a-bras, or strong-arm, with his brothers Humphry, Robert, and Richard, defeated the army of pope Leo IX., besieged him in his castle at Benevento, and kept him there for a year a prisoner; and the court of Rome was obliged to yield to these Normans a very considerable portion of the patrimonies of the holy see. Pope Nicholas II. gave up

the principality of Capua to Richard; and to Robert he gave Apulia, Calabria, and the investiture of Sicily, provided he could wrest it by his arms out of the hands of the Saracens, who were at that time in possession of most of the country. Robert, on his part, agreed to pay annual tribute, and to do homage to the pope. He immediately prepared to extirpate the Saracens from Sicily; and in the year 1101, Roger the Norman completed the conquest of the island, of which the popes have to the present age remained the lords paramount.

The state of the northern kingdoms of Europe was at this time extremely barbarous. Russia, like France, owed its conversion to Christianity to its queen or empress, who was the daughter of Basilius, the emperor of Constantinople, and married the czar of Tsaraslow, in the eighth century. The Swedes, after their first conversion, relapsed again into idolatry, and appear, during the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, to have sunk into the most absolute barbarism. Poland, down to the thirteenth century, was in no better situation. The empire of Constantinople still existing, maintained a struggle against the Bulgarians in the west, and the Turks and Arabians on the east and north. In Italy, the nobility, or independent lords, possessed all the country from Rome to the Calabrian sea; and most of the rest was in the hands of the Normans.

The dukes of Savoy, who are now the kings of Sardinia, began at this time to make a figure. They possessed, by inheritance, the country of Savoy and Maurienne, as a fief of the empire.

The Swiss and the Grisons were under the government of viceroys, whom the emperor appointed. Venice and Genoa were rising gradually into consequence, from the wealth which they acquired by a pretty extensive Mediterranean commerce. The first doge of Venice, who was created in 709, was only a tribune of the people elected by the citizens. The families who gave their voices in this election are many of them still in existence, and are unquestionably the oldest nobility in Europe. The city of Venice, however, had not obtained its name for near two centuries after this period. The doges at first resided at Heraclea; they paid homage to the emperors, and sent annually, as a petty kind of tribute, a mantle of cloth of gold. But these marks of vassalage did not diminish their real power, for they acquired by conquest all the opposite side of Dalmatia, the province of Istria, with Spalatro, Ragusa, and Narenza; and about the middle of the tenth century the doge assumed the title of Duke of Dalmatia; the republic increased in riches and in power; and, prosecuting trade with great spirit, they soon became the commercial agents of the European princes, for all the produce and manufactures of the East.*

Spain was at this time chiefly possessed by the Moors. The Christians occupied about a fourth part of the country, and that the most barren of the whole. Their dominions were Austria, the princes of which took the title of King of Leon; and part of Old Castile, which was governed by counts, as was Barcelona and a part of Catalonia.

* Voltaire sur les Mœurs, ch. xliii.

Navarre and Aragon had likewise a Christian sovereign. The Moors possessed the rest of the country, comprehending Portugal. Their capital, as we have before observed, was the city of Cordova, a most delightful residence, which they had adorned with every embellishment of art and magnificence. These Arabians were at this time, perhaps, the most refined and polished people in the world. Luxury and pleasure at length corrupted the princes of the Moors, and their dominions, in the tenth century, were split among a number of petty sovereigns. Had the Christians been more united than they, they might, perhaps, at this time have shaken off the Moorish yoke, and regained the sovereignty of the whole kingdom; but they were divided among themselves, continually at war, and even formed alliances with the Moors against each other. Yet the Christian princes possessed, at this time, a very considerable proportion of the territory of Spain; and at a period when the feudal oppression was at its height, and the condition of the commonalty, through the greater part of Europe, was in the lowest stage of degradation, one of these small Christian kingdoms exhibited the example of a people who shared the sovereignty with the prince, and wisely limited his arbitrary government by constitutional restraints. This was the kingdom of Aragon, in which not only the representatives of the towns had a seat in the Cortes, or national assemblies, but an officer was elected by the people, termed a Justiza, who was the supreme interpreter of the law, and whose *recognized duty* it was to protect the rights of the people against the encroachments of

the crown. This officer, whose person was sacred, was chosen from among the commoners; he had a right to judge whether the royal edicts were agreeable to law, before they could be carried into effect; and while the king's ministers were answerable to him for their conduct, he was responsible to the Cortes alone. This great officer had likewise the privilege of receiving, in the name of the people, the king's oath of coronation; and during this ceremony he held a naked sword, pointed at the breast of the sovereign, whom he thus addressed:—"We, your equals, constitute you our sovereign, and we solemnly engage to obey your mandates on condition that you protect us in the enjoyment of our rights: if otherwise, not." The kingdom of Aragon was, therefore, at this time, a singular example of a limited monarchy and of a people enjoying a high portion of civil liberty, at a time when the condition of the inferior ranks, in all the surrounding nations, was that of the severest servitude.

In the year 1035, one of these Christian princes, Ferdinand, the son of Sancho, king of Aragon and Navarre, united Old Castile with the kingdom of Leon, which he usurped by the murder of his brother-in-law. Castile henceforth gave name to a kingdom, of which Leon was only a province.

In the reign of this Ferdinand lived Rodrigo, surnamed the Cid, the hero of the great tragedy of Corneille, and of many of the noblest of the old Spanish romances and ballads. The most famous of his real exploits was the assisting Sancho, the eldest son of Ferdinand, to deprive his brothers and sisters of the inheritance left them by their father.

There were at this time near twenty kings in Spain, Christians and Mahometans, besides a great many independent nobility—lords, who came in complete armour, with their attendants, to offer their services to the princes when at war. This custom was common at this time over all Europe, but more particularly among the Spaniards, who were a most romantic people; and in his age, Rodrigo of Bivar, or the Cid, distinguished himself above all other Christian knights. Many others, from his high reputation and prowess, ranged themselves under his banner, and with these having formed a considerable troop, armed *cap-à-pie*, both man and horse, he subdued some of the Moorish princes, and established for himself a small sovereignty in the city of Alcasar. He undertook for his sovereign, Alphonso, king of Old Castile, to conquer the kingdom of New Castile, and achieved it with success; to which he added, some time after, the kingdom of Valencia. Thus Alphonso became, by the arms of his champion the Cid, the most powerful of those petty sovereigns who divided the kingdom of Spain.*

In those ages of discord and darkness, the contentions between the imperial and the papal power make the most conspicuous figure.

The right of the emperors of Germany to nominate the popes had undergone many changes. Henry III., who was a prince of great abilities, resumed this right, which his predecessors had neglected, and named successively three popes,

* Voltaire sur les Mœurs, ch. xliv. *Cid* is merely the Moorish or Arabic for *Lord*.

by his own sovereign will, and without the intervention of a council of the church. From his time, however, the imperial authority began to decline in Italy: and during the minority of his son, Henry IV., several of the popes obtained the chair of St. Peter by bribery and intrigue. Alexander II. was chosen pope in the year 1054, without consulting the imperial court, and maintained his seat, though the emperor actually nominated another. It was the lot of this emperor, Henry IV., who was not deficient in spirit, to have to do with a continued series of the most domineering and insolent pontiffs that ever filled the papal chair. Alexander II., instigated by Hildebrand, one of his cardinals, excommunicated Henry on the pretence of his having sold ecclesiastical benefices, and frequented the company of lewd women; and the effect of this arrogant procedure was, that the people of Italy began to spurn at the imperial authority. On Alexander's death, this same daring Hildebrand had interest to procure himself to be elected pope, without waiting for the emperor's permission. He took the title of Gregory VII., and, meditating to shake off at once all dependence on the empire, his first step was to denounce excommunication against all those who received benefices from the hands of laymen, and against all who conferred them. This was a measure that struck not only against the right of the emperor, but against the privilege of all sovereigns, who, in their dominions at least, were in constant use of conferring benefices. Henry, the emperor, happened to be at war with the Saxons when he received a summons by two of his holiness's legates

to come in person to Rome, and answer to the charge of his having granted the investiture of benefices. He treated this insolent message with proper contempt. Gregory had, at the same time, denounced a sentence of excommunication against Philip I. of France, and had likewise expelled from the pale of the church the Norman princes of Apulia and Calabria. What gave weight to sentences of this kind, which would otherwise have been held in derision, was that policy of the popes by which they took care to level their ecclesiastical thunder against those who had enemies powerful enough to avail themselves of the advantages which such sentences gave them against the party excommunicated. Henry, it must be owned, thought rather of a mean revenge against the pontiff. By his orders, a ruffian seized the pope while he was performing divine service, and after bruising and maltreating him, confined him to prison. The pontiff, however, soon recovered his liberty, and, assembling a council at Rome, pronounced a formal sentence of deposition against the emperor. This awful sentence ran in the following terms :—"In the name of Almighty God, and by *our* authority, I prohibit Henry, the son of our emperor Henry, from governing the Teutonic kingdom and Italy. I release all Christians from their oaths of allegiance to him, and I strictly charge every person whomsoever never to serve or to attend him as king." What gave the whole force to his sentence of deposition and excommunication was the disaffection of most of the German princes to the person and interest of Henry. Taking advantage of the pope's bull, they assembled an army,

surrounded the emperor at Spires, made him prisoner, and released him only on condition that he should abdicate the throne and live as a private person till the event of a general diet at Augsburg, where the pope was to preside, and where he was to be solemnly tried for his crimes.

Henry, now reduced to extremity, was forced to deprecate the wrath of that power which he had formerly so much despised. Attended by a few domestics, he passed the Alps, and finding the pope at Canosa, he presented himself at his holiness's gate, without either guards or attendants. This insolent man ordered him to be stripped of his clothes, which were exchanged for a haircloth; and, after making him fast for three days, condescended to allow him to kiss his feet, where he obtained absolution, on condition of awaiting and conforming himself to the sentence of the diet of Augsburg. The people of Lombardy, however, still adhered to the interest of the emperor. Though they were provoked at his mean submission, they were enraged at the insolence of the pope, and rose up in arms to maintain the right of their sovereign, while Gregory was inciting a rebellion against him in Germany. A considerable party, however, of his subjects still favoured the cause of Henry, while the rest, considering their sovereign as justly deposed for his contumacy against the holy church, elected Rodolph, duke of Suabia, for their emperor.

Henry, reassuming a proper spirit, resolved to depose the pope, and to make a vigorous effort for the recovery of his crown, by giving battle to his rival Rodolph. He accordingly assembled a

council of bishops in the Tyrolese, who solemnly excommunicated and deposed the pope, Gregory VII. The sentence bore that he was the favourer of tyrants, a man guilty of simoniacal practices, of sacrilege, and of magic. The last accusation was founded on his having predicted, in the most positive terms, that Henry, in the first engagement against Rodolph, would fall in battle. The event gave the lie to his prophecy, for Rodolph was the victim, and was killed in battle by the celebrated Godfrey of Boulogne, who afterwards conquered Jerusalem. Gregory, however, kept his seat in the chair of St. Peter, and still persevered in his audacity. Henry was determined to punish him in the most exemplary manner, and laid siege to Rome, which he took by storm, while Gregory, blocked up in the Castle of St. Angelo, continued still to threaten excommunication and vengeance. This pontiff, whose insolent, tyrannical, and inflexible character involved him in perpetual faction and war, was allowed at length to die quietly in his bed. Henry was obliged to repair to Germany; the Neapolitans came to the relief of Rome; and Gregory in the meantime died at Salerno. The catholic church has devoutly placed this venerable pontiff among the number of her saints.

His successors in the popedom continued to act upon the same principles, and it was the fate of Henry IV. to be constantly excommunicated and persecuted by every pope in his time. Urban II. instigated Conrad, the son of Henry, to rebel against his father; and after Conrad's death, his brother, afterwards Henry V., followed the same unnatural example. The miseries of this unfortunate prince were now drawing to a period. He

was confined by his rebellious subjects in Mentz, where he was again solemnly deposed by the pope's legates, and stripped of his imperial robes by the deputies of his own son. He made his escape from prison, and after wandering for some time in want, he died at Liege.

The emperor Henry V., who had joined with the pope in all the measures against his father, had taken that part only to accomplish his own purposes of ambition. No sooner had he obtained the sovereignty, than he maintained the same pretensions to humiliate the popes. He obliged Paschal II. to allow the emperors to have the right of conferring benefices—a prerogative for which his father had paid so dear; but after many disputes and a great deal of bloodshed, he was in the end compelled, like his father, to yield to the terms prescribed to him, and to renounce this right for himself and his successors. Things went on much in the same way during a succession of popes and a succession of emperors; there was a constant struggle, which in general terminated in favour of the holy see.

Frederic I., surnamed Barbarossa, a prince of great talents and of high spirit, was summoned to go to Rome to receive the imperial crown from Adrian IV.* It was customary at this time, from

* This pope was an Englishman, of the name of Nicholas Breakspear; the only Englishman that ever sat in the chair of St. Peter. His learning and abilities raised him from poverty and obscurity, first to the dignity of abbot of St. Rufus in Provençe, next to that of Cardinal (in 1146,) and lastly to the papacy (in 1154.) He said of himself, that "he had been strained through the limbec of affliction; but that all the hardships of his life were nothing in comparison with the burden of the papal crown."

the ambiguous relation in which the popes and emperors stood to each other, that the pope entrenched himself upon the emperor's approach, and all Italy was in arms. The emperor promised that he would make no attempt against the life, the person, nor the honour of the pope, the cardinals, and the magistrates. A knight, completely armed, made this oath, in the name of Frederic Barbarossa; but the ceremonial required, that when the pope came out to meet him, the emperor should prostrate himself on the ground, kiss his feet, hold the stirrup of his horse while he mounted, and lead him by the bridle for nine paces. Frederic refused at first these humiliating marks of submission: the cardinals looked upon it as the signal of a civil war, and betook themselves to flight; but Frederic was reasoned into compliance with a ceremony which he was determined to hold for nothing more than a piece of form. His indignation broke out immediately in the plainest terms, when the deputies of the people of Rome informed him that they had chosen him, though a foreigner, to be their sovereign. "It is false," said he, "you have not chosen me to be your sovereign: my predecessors, Charlemagne and Otho, conquered you by the strength of their arms; and I am, by established possession, your lawful sovereign." But the spirit of this prince and his intrepid activity were not equal to the extreme difficulties with which he had to struggle; the popes, who disputed his right to the empire; the Romans, who refused to submit to his authority; and all the cities of Italy, which wanted to vindicate their liberty; Poland, too, and Bohemia, were at war with him,

and gave him constant occupation. The troubles of Italy at last compelled him to measures which his haughty spirit could very ill brook. He acknowledged the supremacy of Alexander III., he condescended to kiss his feet and to hold the stirrup, and to restore what he possessed which had at any time belonged to the holy see. On these terms he gave peace to Italy, embarked on an expedition to the holy wars, and died in Asia, by bathing himself, while overheated, in the Cydnus—the same river which, in a similar manner, had almost occasioned the death of Alexander the Great.

Under his son, Henry VI., the spirit of the popedom and of the emperors continued still the same. Pope Celestinus, while Henry VI. was kneeling to kiss his feet, took that opportunity of kicking off his crown.* He made amends to him, however, for this insolence, by making him a gift of Naples and Sicily, from which Henry had extirpated the last of the Norman princes. Thus Naples and Sicily were transferred to the Germans, and became an appanage of the empire. Each succeeding pope seemed to rise upon the pretensions of his predecessor; till at length Innocent III., in the beginning of the thirteenth century, established the temporal power (for which his predecessors had been so long struggling) upon a solid basis. Taking advantage of the divisions of

* Voltaire doubts, as most of his readers will do, the literal truth of this story, but allows that the very fabrication of such a story marks the inveterate animosity which subsisted between the emperors and the popes, as much as if it had been true.—VOLTAIRE *sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlix.

Germany, where opposite factions had chosen two emperors, Frederic II. and Otho of Saxony, Innocent, by espousing the party of Otho, obtained for the popedom the absolute possession of Italy, from the one sea to the other. He had the sovereignty of Rome, where he abolished the name of consul, which had subsisted to this time; and Innocent found himself possessed of a power which was supreme in every sense of the word.

CHAPTER VIII.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND during the Eleventh, Twelfth, and part of the Thirteenth Centuries:—Reign and Character of William the Conqueror—Doomsday-book—William Rufus—Henry I.—Stephen—Henry II. (Plantagenet)—Richard Cœur de Lion—King John—MAGNA CHARTA.

THE consequence of the battle of Hastings, which was fought on the 14th of October, 1066, was the submission of all England to William the Conqueror. William advanced by rapid marches to London, and before he had come within sight of the city, he received the submission of the clergy and the chief nobility, among whom was Edgar Atheling, the nephew of Edward the Confessor, and the last male of the Saxon line. This prince had just before been acknowledged as king, upon the intelligence of the death of Harold, but he wanted both spirit and abilities to make good his title. William accepted the crown upon the same terms on which it was usually conferred on the Saxon monarchs; which were, that he should govern according to the established customs of the kingdom: for this politic prince, who might have ruled upon any conditions, was pleased that his usurpation should receive the sanction of something like a free consent of his subjects. From

the beginning of his reign, however, his partiality to his countrymen, the Normans, was abundantly conspicuous. They were promoted to all offices of honour and emolument, and he gave extreme disgust to the English by the partition which he made among these foreigners of the lands of the most illustrious nobility of the kingdom, as a punishment for having adhered to the defence of their king and country. A visit which William paid to his Norman dominions gave these discontents time to ripen and break out, and a conspiracy is said to have been secretly formed for destroying at once all the Normans by a general massacre, upon Ash Wednesday, 1068. The return, however, of William soon silenced these discontents; the chief persons accused of promoting this conspiracy fled over sea, and the body of the people were intimidated into tranquillity.

From that time forward, William lost all confidence in his subjects of England. He determined to treat them as a conquered nation, and to secure his power by humbling all who were able to make resistance. This policy, however, embroiled him in perpetual commotions. Malcolm Canmore, king of Scotland, and Sweyn, king of Denmark, with the chief of the old Saxon nobility, excited a most formidable insurrection in the north. The activity of William, however, disconcerted their measures before they were ripe for execution; he made peace with the Scottish king, and showed an unusual instance of clemency, in accepting the submission of his rebellious subjects. These instances of rebellion must have sufficiently in-

formed him of their disposition; but they did not alter the general tenor of his conduct: he continued to treat the English with distance, reserve, and severity. New vexations and impositions brought on new insurrections, and William was obliged in person to make several progresses through the kingdom, which generally reduced matters only to a temporary tranquillity. In short, he had no great reason to love his subjects of England, and he was heartily detested by them. He was a prince to whom nature had denied the requisites of making himself beloved, and who, therefore, made it his first object to render himself feared. Even the Normans, instigated probably by the French, endeavoured to withdraw themselves from his yoke. To establish order in that country, he carried over an army of Englishmen; thus, by a capricious vicissitude of fortune, we see the Normans brought over for the conquest of the English, and the English sent back to conquer the Normans. With these troops he reduced the rebels to submission, and returned to England to be again embroiled in conspiracies and rebellion. The last and severest of his troubles arose from his own children. His eldest son, Robert, had been promised by his father the sovereignty of Maine, a province of France, which had submitted to William; he claimed the performance in his father's lifetime, who contemptuously told him, he thought it was time enough to throw off his clothes when he went to bed. Robert, who was of a most violent temper, instantly withdrew to Normandy, where in a short time he engaged

all the young nobility to espouse his quarrel. Brittany, Anjou, and Maine likewise took part against William, who brought over another army of the English to subdue the rebellion. The father and son met in fight, and, being clad in armour, did not know each other, till Robert, having wounded his father and thrown him from his horse, his voice (calling out for assistance) discovered him to be his antagonist. Stung with consciousness of the crime, Robert fell at his feet, and in the most submissive manner entreated his forgiveness. The indignation of William was not to be appeased: he gave his son his malediction instead of his pardon; and though he afterwards employed him in his service and left him heir to his Norman dominions, it does not appear that the prince was ever received into favour.

The last of the enterprises of William was against France, to which he had been excited by some railleries which Philip I. had vented on occasion of his personal infirmities. William, to convince him that he could yet make himself formidable, entered that province of the kingdom called the *Isle of France*, with an immense army, and destroyed, burnt, and plundered all that lay in his way. An accident, however, put an end to his life. He was thrown from his horse, and carried to a small village near Rouen, where he died. He bequeathed the kingdom of England to his youngest son William, who had always been his favourite. This bequest would have availed little, but for a concurrence of favourable circumstances. The English people hated Robert, the

eldest son, who had lived little among them, and whose rebellion they disapproved. Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, was the friend of William Rufus, and the principal nobility of the kingdom were attached to his interest. To Robert he left Normandy; and to Henry, his second son, he left the effects of his mother Matilda, without any inheritance in territory.

William the Conqueror, though not an amiable, was certainly a great prince. He possessed extreme vigour of mind, and a bold and enterprising spirit, which was always regulated by prudence. The maxims of his administration were severe, but enforced with consummate policy. He introduced into England the feudal law, which he had found established in France, and which, during that age, was the foundation both of the stability and of the disorders in most of the monarchical governments of Europe. He divided all the lands of England, with a very few exceptions besides the royal demesnes, into baronies; and he bestowed these, with the reservation of stated services and payments, on his Norman followers. From these Norman barons are descended some of the most ancient and noble families of England. William, in short, through the whole of his reign, considered the English as a conquered nation. Under the Anglo-Saxon government the people had enjoyed a very considerable portion of freedom. The greater barons, perhaps even some of the landholders, had their share in the government, by their place in the Wittenagemot, or assembly of the states. Under William, the

rights and privileges of all the orders of the state seem to have been annihilated and overpowered by the weight of the crown; but this very circumstance, unfavourable as it may appear to the people's liberties, was, in fact, the very cause of the subsequent freedom of the English constitution. It was the excessive power of the crown that gave rise to a spirit of union among the people in all their efforts to resist it; and from the want of that spirit of union in the other feudal kingdoms of the continent—a spirit which was not excited in them by a total extinction of their liberties, as it was in England by the whole career of William the Conqueror—we can easily account for the great difference at this day between their constitutions and ours, with respect to political freedom.

One of the most oppressive measures of William the Conqueror was the enactment of the forest laws. He reserved to himself the exclusive privilege of killing game throughout all England, and enacted the most severe penalties on all who should attempt it without his permission. Not satisfied with this severe and most impolitic measure, William, to gratify his passion for the chase, laid waste a country of about fifty miles in circuit, drove out all the inhabitants, and threw down the villages, and even churches, to make the New Forest in Hampshire; thus exterminating at once above 100,000 inhabitants, many of whom perished from famine. It is not, therefore, without reason that Lord Lyttelton remarks, "that Attila himself did not more justly deserve to be named the *Scourge of God*, than this merciless Norman." It was this severe restriction of the forest laws—

this mark of servitude—that, above every other circumstance, lay heavy on the English, and, in the reign of the succeeding prince, excited at length those vigorous efforts which produced the most favourable concessions for the general liberty.

Preparatory to William's plan of reducing England entirely under the feudal government, he found it necessary to engage in and complete a very great undertaking. This was a general survey of all the kingdom, an account of its extent, its proprietors, their tenures, and their values; the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land which they contained; the number of tenants, cottagers, and servants of all denominations who lived upon them. Commissioners were appointed for this purpose, who, after six years employed in the survey, brought him an exact account of the whole property in the kingdom. This monument, called *Doomsday Book*, the most valuable piece of antiquity possessed by any nation, is at this day in existence, and is preserved in the English Exchequer. It was, in the year 1782, printed by an order of parliament. It may easily be conceived how much it must tend to illustrate the ancient state of the kingdom.

William II., surnamed Rufus, had all his father's vices without his good qualities. No action of importance signalized his reign, which was of thirteen years' duration. The *red* king was a violent and tyrannical prince, arbitrary and overbearing to his subjects, and unkind to his relations. The despotism of his authority, however, kept the kingdom in peaceable submission. He indulged

without reserve that domineering policy which suited his temper; and which, if supported, as it was in him, with courage and vigour, proves often more successful in disorderly times than the deepest foresight and the most refined political wisdom. He left some laudable memorials of a truly royal spirit in the building of the Tower of London, Westminster Hall, and London Bridge.

While hunting the stag, he was killed by a random shot of an arrow, and, leaving no legitimate issue, the succession devolved, of course, on Robert of Normandy, his elder brother; but he was then too distant to assert his pretensions. This valiant prince was at that time distinguishing himself by his heroism in the first crusade against the infidels in Palestine, and the throne of England was, in the meantime, occupied by Henry, his younger brother, without opposition. The circumstances under which Henry I. had acquired the crown had their influence upon the whole tenor of his life; so true it is, that fortune and accident often decide what shall be a man's character. Had Henry I. mounted the throne, as the nearest heir to the preceding monarch, it is not to be doubted, that, from the dispositions which he certainly possessed, he would have been a great, perhaps a good and virtuous prince; but his cause was a bad one, and was not easily to be supported with a good conscience and a virtuous character. Not satisfied with the usurpation of the crown of England, he determined to strip his elder brother, likewise, of his dominions of Normandy. Robert returned with all speed from his Eastern expedition, but his army was defeated,

and he himself taken prisoner. Henry carried him in triumph to England, where he ungenerously detained him in close confinement in Wales during the remainder of his life.

An usurper must secure his power by acts of popularity. Henry, soon after his accession to the throne, granted a charter,* extremely favourable to the liberties of the people, and which has been justly regarded as the groundwork of the claim of privileges made by the English barons in the reign of king John, which he confirmed by Magna Charta. These privileges, it is even contended by the zealous advocates for the rights of the people, were of a much more ancient date. "Henry I.," says Lord Lyttelton, "by this charter restored the Saxon laws which were in use under Edward the Confessor;" but with such alterations, or, as he styled them, emendations, as had been made by his father, with the advice of his parliament; at the same time, annulling all civil customs and illegal exactions, by which the realm had been unjustly oppressed. The charter also contained very considerable mitigations of those feudal rights claimed by the king over his tenants, and by them over theirs, which either were the most burthensome in their own nature, or had been made so by an abusive extension. In short, all the liberty that could well be consistent with the safety and interest of the lord in his fief was allowed to the vassal by this charter, and the profits due to the former were settled according to a determined and

* For the provisions of this charter, see "Carte's History of England," b. v. § 48.

moderate rule of law. "It was," says Sir Henry Spelman, "the original of king John's Magna Charta, containing most of the articles of it, either particularly expressed, or, in general, under the confirmation it gives to the laws of Edward the Confessor."

Henry was now absolutely master of England and Normandy. Fortune seemed to smile upon him, and to promise a reign of uninterrupted tranquillity; but his life was near a period, and even that short interval was overcast with calamity. His only son, William, a youth of great promise, in whom all his hopes were centered, and whom he loved with an excess of tenderness, was drowned in his voyage from Normandy, whither his father had carried him, that he might be recognized as his successor in his foreign dominions. Henry from that moment lost all relish for life; the remaining years of his reign were occupied chiefly in opposing the pretensions of his nephew, the son of his elder brother Robert; who, with the aid of France, sought to make good his title to the throne of his grandfather, William the Conqueror. The death of this prince, however, relieved him of his fears from that quarter. His daughter, Matilda, he had first given in marriage to the emperor, Henry V. of Germany. On his demise she had married Geoffry Plantagenet, eldest son of the count of Anjou. She was destined by Henry to be his successor in the dominions of England and of Normandy; but he had imprudently taken a measure which defeated these intentions. He had invited to his court his nephew,

Stephen, son of the count of Blois. Stephen, who was grandson to William the Conqueror, by Adela, his fourth daughter, was a young man of talents and ambition; he saw the success of his uncle's usurpation, and meditated to run the same career. He used every art to gain popularity; and, by his bravery, generosity, and familiar address, he acquired the esteem both of the nobility and the people. Henry, his uncle, died in Normandy, after a reign of thirty-five years, and left by his will, his daughter Matilda heiress of all his dominions. Stephen was at that time likewise in Normandy, but hastening immediately to England, he found the body of the nation disposed to acknowledge his pretensions. Hugh Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and steward of the household, having averred upon oath, that the late king had expressed his intentions to make Stephen his heir, the archbishop of Canterbury anointed him king without further scruple. The chief pretext on which the partisans of Stephen grounded their denial of the right of Henry's daughter, Matilda, to the crown was her illegitimacy. Her mother Matilda, it was alleged, had in her youth taken the veil, and consequently Henry's marriage with her was illegal and impious. The pretext had no solid foundation, for it was clearly proved that the queen had never taken the vows, though, while living in a convent, she had worn the habit of a nun. The party of Stephen, however, had such influence at Rome, that the pope (Innocent II.) declared his title good on the above ground.

Stephen was an *usurper*, and therefore began his reign with many acts of popularity. It is indeed difficult to say, whether complacence might not have been his real character; for his turbulent and chequered reign afforded no opportunity for a display of the milder virtues, even if he possessed them. His competitor, Matilda, was extremely formidable, not only from foreign connexions, but from a numerous party of the English, who were devoted to her interest. David, king of Scotland, a prince of great valour and prowess, whose father, Malcolm Canmore, had married the sister of Henry I., espoused the cause of his niece Matilda, and made a formidable incursion into the heart of England, but sustained a signal defeat in the great battle of the Standard.* Robert the earl of Gloucester, a natural brother of Matilda, escorted her into England, with a numerous army, to vindicate her right to her father's kingdom. They engaged Stephen near to the city of Lincoln, defeated his army, and took him prisoner. Matilda was acknowledged immediately for the lawful sovereign of the kingdom, and the unfortunate Stephen thrown into a dungeon. But mark the caprice of fortune—the conduct of Matilda, haughty, insolent, and severe, became immediately disgustful to her subjects; an insurrection was formed, which, before she was apprized of her danger, drove her from her throne. Stephen was taken from his prison, and again recognized as sovereign. Matilda fled the king-

* So called from the English Standard being mounted on a mast, fixed in a large chariot.—See an account of this battle in Carte, b. v. § 77.

dom, and the death of her partisan, the earl of Gloucester, put an end to all her prospects of ambition.

Stephen was, however, now to compete with a new rival, more formidable than any that had yet opposed him. This was Henry, the son of Matilda, a youth of the most promising abilities, and of great personal prowess. While in the sixteenth year of his age, impatient of signalizing himself in a field where he had so glorious an interest to contend for, he solicited his great-uncle David, king of Scotland, to confer on him the order of knighthood—a ceremony considered as essential, in those days of chivalry, to the practice of arms. His mother invested him with the possession of Normandy. He succeeded to his father's inheritance of Anjou; he married Eleanor, heiress of Guienne and Poitou, the divorced wife of Louis VII. of France; and, possessed of these extensive domains, he now resolved to reclaim his hereditary dominions of England. He landed in England with a considerable force, and, after taking several towns that refused to acknowledge his title and pretensions, he prepared to terminate his dispute with Stephen in a decisive engagement. Fortunately for all parties, Eustace, the eldest son and heir of Stephen, a weak prince, died at this critical juncture. This event opened the way for an accommodation, of which these were the terms:—that Stephen should enjoy the crown during his life, which should devolve at his death to Henry; while William, the only surviving son of Stephen, should inherit Boulogne and his patrimonial estate. This treaty gave great joy to the king.

dom, and passed into effect soon after, by the death of Stephen, and the peaceful accession of Henry Plantagenet to the throne of England.

Henry II. succeeded to the kingdom, of which he was in every sense most deserving, with the unanimous approbation of his subjects. Conscious of his own powers, he employed himself without reserve in the reformation of abuses, which under his predecessors had acquired such root and strength as to have become part of the constitution; he dismissed immediately all the mercenary troops, who had committed great disorders in the kingdom.

To secure upon a firm foundation the liberties of the people, as well as his own prerogative, he gave charters to many of the principal towns, by which the citizens claimed their freedom and privileges, independent of all subject superiors. These charters are the groundwork of the English liberty, and the first shock which weakened the feudal government established by William the Conqueror.

Henry's authority at home seemed to be fixed on the securest basis, and his power abroad was very extensive. In right of his father, he was master of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine; in that of his mother, of Normandy; and in that of his wife Eleanor, of Guienne, Poitou, St. Onge, Auvergne Perigord, Augoumois, and the Limosin: to which he soon after added Brittany, by marrying his son, who was yet a child, to the infant heiress of that dukedom. Thus he was possessed of more than a third of France; and, enjoying the affection of his subjects, with a well-established authority in

his kingdom of England, everything seemed to promise that he would be one of the happiest, as well as one of the most powerful of the European monarchs; but a gloomy cloud was gathering apace, which soon overwhelmed all these prospects of happiness. The clergy of his kingdom, headed by one of the most ambitious and daring of men, abridged his power, embroiled his dominions, and entirely destroyed his peace. This man was Thomas à Becket, whom Henry had raised from meanness and obscurity to the highest offices of the state, and dignities in the church. From a menial office in the law, he became ecclesiastic, archdeacon of Canterbury, constable of the Tower, and chancellor of England. His revenues were immense, his expenses incredible; he lived with a pomp and retinue equal to that of his sovereign, with whom he was on a footing of the most familiar intimacy and friendship. On the death of the archbishop of Canterbury, the king, who had in view to reform ecclesiastical as well as civil abuses, conferred the primacy of England on his favourite Becket, as he expected that, from gratitude and affection to his benefactor, he would the more readily co-operate in his measures; but he was miserably disappointed. Becket's promotion to the archbishopric of Canterbury, which made him for life the second person in the kingdom, produced a total change in his conduct and demeanour. He resigned immediately the office of chancellor, and affected in his own person the most mortified appearance of rigorous sanctity. He soon manifested the motive of this surprising change. A clergyman had debauched the daughter

of a gentleman, and murdered the father to prevent the effects of his resentment. The king insisted that this atrocious villain should be tried by the civil magistrates; Becket stood up for the privileges of the church, and refused to deliver him up. He appealed to the see of Rome. This was the time for Henry to make his decisive attack against the immunities claimed by the church, when to defend these it must vindicate the foulest of crimes. He summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon, where the following regulations were enacted: that churchmen, when accused of crimes, should be tried in the civil courts; that the king should ultimately judge in ecclesiastical and spiritual appeals; that the prelates should furnish the public supplies as barons; that forfeited goods should not be protected in churches. These, with several other regulations, were subscribed by all the bishops present, and Becket, with much reluctance, was obliged to add his name to the number. It remained that the pope should ratify these regulations, which was to expect that he would abridge his own authority. Alexander III. peremptorily refused it, and Becket, pretending the deepest remorse for his rash acquiescence in such impious concessions, prevailed on his holiness to absolve him from the offence. Henry now perceived that he had no alternative but to take the strongest measures. He summoned a council at Northampton, where Becket defended his cause in person, but was condemned as guilty of contempt of the king's authority, and as wanting in that allegiance he had sworn to his sovereign. His whole estates

and property were confiscated, and three several prosecutions immediately brought against him, to account for sums he had received and improperly expended during his several offices. The courage of the prelate seemed to grow from his misfortunes: arrayed in his episcopal garments, and with the cross in his hand, he repaired to the palace, entered the royal apartments, and boldly declared that he put himself under the protection of the supreme pontiff of the Christian church. He then took his leave and embarked immediately for the continent, where Louis, king of France, who was Henry's mortal enemy, gave him a most cordial reception; and on his arrival at Rome, the pope honoured him with the highest marks of distinction. Henry, exasperated at these favours shown to an exile and a traitor, resolved at once to throw off all dependence on the see of Rome. He immediately issued orders to his justiciaries, prohibiting, under the severest penalties, all appeals to the pope or archbishop of Canterbury; and he declared it treason to bring from him any mandate into the kingdom. Becket, in his turn, issued from Rome a sentence of excommunication against all the king's ministry, and threatened the same sentence against Henry himself, if he did not immediately repent and atone for his past conduct.

The consequences of papal excommunications were, in those days (as we have seen,) extremely fatal. Henry was aware of his danger, and began to fear that he had carried his resentment too far. It is probable that he found his subjects disapproved of his procedure; and he now seemed inclined to bring matters to an accommodation.

Becket, who regretted his substantial losses, was equally disposed to a reconciliation; the prelate was allowed to return, and had an interview with his sovereign, whose generosity agreed to restore him and his adherents to all their benefices, and to allow matters to remain on the footing they had been before their differences.

Becket gloried in his heart at this triumph, which served only to increase his ambition, insolence, and presumption. The condescension of Henry convinced him of his own superiority, and of his sovereign's weakness. He began to make triumphal processions through the kingdom, and to exercise his spiritual and judicial powers with the most arbitrary increase of authority. The archbishop of York, who, in his absence, crowned the king's eldest son, was suspended from his function, as were several other prelates who had officiated at the solemnity. Deposition and excommunication were daily occurrences, and Henry, who was then in Normandy, heard with surprise and indignation, that his whole kingdom was in a flame, from the turbulent and tyrannical conduct of the primate. A few hasty words which he uttered upon the first intelligence of these disorders were interpreted by some of his servants into a mandate. Four of them immediately embarked for England, where they arrived next day, and finding Becket in the act of celebrating vespers in the cathedral church of Canterbury, they beat out his brains before the altar. Thus the man, who ought to have fallen by public justice as a traitor, was, from the mode of his death, considered as a saint and martyr.

The murder of Becket gave the king unfeigned concern; he saw that his death would produce those very effects with regard to the church, which he most wished to prevent; and that the bulk of his subjects, blinded by the influence of their priests and confessors, would consider him as his murderer. He made the most ample submissions to the pope, who pardoned him on assurance of sincere repentance.

The minds of the people were withdrawn from these disquieting topics, by an object of no less importance. The Irish, an ancient and early civilized people, who for some time after their first conversion to Christianity are said to have outshone all the nations of the West in learning and the knowledge of the arts and sciences, were replunged into barbarism by the invasion of the Danes, who overran the whole country, and kept the natives in the most oppressive state of dependence and servitude. In the period of which we now treat, the country was divided into five principalities, Ulster, Leinster, Munster, Meath, and Connaught: each of which was governed by a prince of its own; but these five principalities were subdivided among a number of petty chiefs, who acknowledged very little subordination to the prince. Dermot M'Morroch, a weak licentious tyrant, who was king of Leinster, had ravished the daughter of the king of Meath, who, in revenge for the injury, with the aid of a neighbouring prince, expelled him from his kingdom. The ravisher sought protection of Henry, and offered to hold his crown tributary to that of England, in case he should recover it by his assistance. Henry empowered his sub-

jects, by letters patent, to arm in defence of the exile. Several of the nobility, particularly the earl of Pembroke, surnamed Strongbow, raised troops for the purpose of an invasion. They landed in Ireland, and were laying waste the country, and reducing every thing to subjection, when Henry himself, jealous of their success, in case they should achieve the conquest without his personal assistance, landed in that kingdom in the year 1172, with a few troops, and took possession of the country with very little opposition. He proceeded from Waterford to Dublin, and received the submission of all the chiefs of Leinster and Meath. Many of the chiefs, likewise, of Munster and Connaught, followed the same example. But Roderic O'Connor, the prince of Connaught, and nominal monarch of Ireland, still refused to submit. It was not till three years afterwards that he acknowledged the sovereignty of Henry, which acknowledgment he signified by sending deputies to the king at Windsor, who received this flattering embassy with great solemnity in full council. The record of this transaction has been preserved, and fully explains the nature of the submission demanded from the Irish. Henry considered himself as the feudal monarch of Ireland; and Roderic, in his own name and in the name of all his vassals, was required to do him homage and to pay him tribute. The tribute stipulated was every tenth hide of land, to be applied to the use of the public, and a proper provision of hawks and hounds to be furnished annually for the king's pleasures. All Ireland was to be subjected to

these stipulations, except those parts of the country which the earl of Pembroke and his followers had conquered before the arrival of Henry, which were left in the absolute possession of the Welsh and English barons. These were the territories of Meath, Wexford, Dublin, and Waterford, which were denominated the English *pale*. Henry divided Ireland into counties, and appointed vicecomites or sheriffs to preserve the peace: he erected courts of justice, and introduced the laws of England; but he took no steps to establish or secure his authority in Ireland; and no sooner had he crossed the channel, than the Irish chiefs renounced their allegiance, and the English and Welsh barons were left to defend their possessions of the pale in the middle of the hostile country, in the best way they could. Henry seemed now increasing in power and glory, and in every happiness that could flow from the affection of his subjects. He had caused his eldest son, Henry, to be anointed king, and acknowledged for his successor. His second son, Richard, was invested with the sovereignty of Guienne and Poitou. His third, Geoffrey, had, in the right of his wife, the duchy of Brittany; and John, the youngest, was destined to be monarch of Ireland. This exaltation of his children was the source of calamities and disquiets which embittered the life of this excellent prince, and at length brought him to an untimely grave.

The story of Rosamond Clifford is familiar to all who, at any time, have amused themselves with ballad and romance. The jealousy which this beautiful favourite occasioned in the breast

of Eleanor, the consort of Henry, and the disquiets which that monarch sustained from her haughty and disgusting temper, are no fiction, though, perhaps, the barbarous revenge by the murder of Rosamond, in the bower of Woodstock, may be accounted such.*

Prince Henry, a proud and ambitious youth, was not satisfied with the honours paid him by his father, without receiving a present share in the administration. Geoffrey and Richard, of the same disposition with their brother, were persuaded by the queen to assert their title to their several territories; and on refusal of their demands they betook themselves to the court of France, where they received protection and assurances of assistance from Louis. They drew to their interest many of the greater barons of England, and these unnatural children prepared, with the aid of a powerful army, to invade and dispossess their father of his dominions. The heroism of Henry's mind got the better of his feelings as a parent. He flew to the continent, opposed them with spirit in every quarter, and had speedily reduced the confederated rebels, with their foreign ally, to propose terms of reconciliation, when he was alarmed by an irruption from William king of Scotland. Returning to England, he found the ancient leaven

* Carte vindicates Henry from this stain on his character, by endeavouring to prove that his connexion with Rosamond ceased on his marriage with queen Eleanor; but a register of the birth of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Rosamond's youngest son, which exists in the Cotton Library, disproves this.—See "Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry," vol. ii. —Introduction to the Ballad of Fair Rosamond.

of disaffection, on account of Becket's murder, revived and violently fermenting in the breasts of his subjects. To conciliate their minds, he resolved on expiating his alleged guilt, by the most solemn penance and humiliation. He walked barefooted through the city of Canterbury, and, on arriving at the cathedral, prostrated himself on the ground before the tomb of the martyr, and passed a day and night in fasting and prayer: not satisfied with this mortification, he submitted his bare shoulders to be scourged by the monks of the chapter. Absolved now from all his offences, reconciled to the church and to his subjects, he prepared to revenge the depredations of the Scots, which he did in the most effectual manner by a decisive victory, in which William their king became his prisoner. The foreign rebels, finding all disturbances quieted at home, abandoned their enterprise; but the turbulent and ambitious spirit of the princes was not quieted. Jealous of each other, they concurred in no measures except those of resistance and opposition to their father. Two of them, indeed, expiated their crime by an early death. Geoffrey, who was stigmatized in England by the name of the *child of perdition*, was killed in a tournament at Paris; and Henry, the eldest, died of a fever, lamenting on his death-bed his unnatural conduct with the deepest remorse.

The afflictions of Henry were not at an end. Philip, now king of France, disputed his title to the guardianship of Geoffrey's son, Arthur, prince of Brittany, and threatened a formal invasion. Richard was again seduced from his duty, and openly ranged himself on the side of the king of

France; and Henry saw his continental dominions invaded, plundered, and possessed by the confederates. A treaty, however, was set on foot, in which, after many mortifying concessions, Henry agreed to defray the charges of the war to the king of France, and to give a free pardon to all his rebellious lords and their vassals. A list was presented to him of their names, among whom he saw that of his son John, his favourite child, whom he had till that moment believed faithful to his duty. The unhappy father broke out into expressions of the utmost despair; cursed the day on which he had received his miserable being, and bestowed on his ungrateful children a malediction, which he never could be prevailed on to retract: a lingering fever, caused by a broken heart, soon after terminated his life. Richard, it is said, came to view the body of his father, and, struck with remorse, accused himself in the deepest terms with having contributed by his unnatural conduct to bring his parent to the grave. Thus died Henry, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, an ornament to the English throne, and a monarch surpassing all his cotemporaries in the valuable qualities of a sovereign. During his reign, all foreign improvements in literature and politeness, in the laws and the arts, seem to have been, in a good measure, transplanted into England; and that kingdom was become little inferior, in those respects, to any of its continental neighbours. Henry's attention to the administration of justice had gained him so great a reputation, that even foreign and distant princes made him the umpire of their differences: he determined a dispute

regarding some controverted territory between the kings of Navarre and Castile. The reign of Henry was remarkable for an innovation which was afterwards carried further by his successors, and was attended by the most important consequences to the government. He abolished that military force which was established by the feudal institutions, by exchanging the military services of the crown's vassals for money. These payments were termed scutage, and they were employed by the sovereign in levying troops from abroad. Whether this policy was beneficial or otherwise, is disputable: one good consequence, at least, was, that it weakened the strict bonds of the feudal system, which was a fertile source both of despotism in the prince, and anarchy and disorder among the vassals.

Richard I., surnamed Cœur de Lion, had all those qualities which gain the admiration of a romantic age, but few that could conduce to the happiness of his subjects or command the approbation of posterity. The whole of his reign was a tale of romance, intrepid valour, imprudence, and misfortune. All Europe was at this time infected with the enthusiasm of the holy wars, and Richard, immediately upon his accession, prepared to signalize himself in an expedition to Palestine, which his conscience, or rather his romantic turn of mind, represented to him as the only field of real glory for a Christian prince. Little regardful of the interests of his people, he raised an immense sum of money, by all the various methods of arbitrary enforcement, and, forming a league with Philip Augustus, king of

France, who possessed somewhat of his own disposition, though with less generosity, the two sovereigns agreed to join their forces in an expedition against the infidels. Many were the mistrusts and mutual reconciliations between these two monarchs: at length, after the taking of Acre, and a few other successful exploits jointly performed, Philip thought proper to return to France, and left the field of glory to Richard, without a rival. The English monarch went on from victory to victory. The most remarkable of his battles was that near to Ascalon, where he engaged and defeated Saladin, the most renowned of the Saracen monarchs, and left 40,000 of the enemy dead upon the field. Ascalon surrendered, as did several other cities, to the victorious Richard, who now prepared for the siege of Jerusalem; but at the most important crisis, which, if fortunate, as every thing seemed to promise, would have terminated the expedition in the most glorious manner, the king of England, on a review of his army, found them so wasted with famine, with fatigue, and even with victory, that, with the utmost mortification of heart, he was obliged entirely to abandon the enterprise. The war was finished by a truce with Saladin, in which it was agreed that the Christian pilgrims should pass to Jerusalem in perfect security. Richard now thought of returning to his dominions, but, unwilling to put himself in the power of his rival Philip, by traversing the kingdom of France, he sailed with a single ship to Italy, and was wrecked near Aquileia. Thence proceeding to Ragusa,

and putting on a pilgrim's disguise, he resolved to make his way, on foot, through Germany. He was discovered, however, at Vienna, by Leopold, duke of Austria, and thrown into prison by the command of the emperor Henry VI. No sooner was Richard's situation known to his subjects, than they vied with each other in contributions for his ransom, which was fixed at an exorbitant sum by the emperor, and opposed with every artifice of the meanest policy by the king of France. His brother John, likewise, who in his absence had endeavoured to usurp the government of England, is said to have had a conference with Philip, in which the perpetual captivity of Richard was agreed upon, while he himself was to be secured upon the English throne. These cabals, however, were unsuccessful. Richard obtained his liberty on payment of a ransom equal to about 300,000*l.* sterling, which his subjects levied by the cheerful contributions of all ranks of the state. On his return to his dominions, he was received with the utmost transports of delight and satisfaction. Richard had given his subjects no real cause of affection towards him; during a reign of ten years he was but four months in the kingdom; but it is the disposition of the English to revere heroism, and to commiserate misfortune. His traitorous brother, after some submission, was received into favour; and Richard, during the residue of his reign, employed himself in a spirited revenge against the perfidious Philip, whose dominions he harassed by a war, which he carried into the heart of France. A treaty, however, was brought about

by the pope's legate, and the contest was terminated soon after by the death of Richard, who, in an assault upon the castle of one of his rebellious vassals in the Limosin, was killed by an arrow. He died in the tenth year of his reign, and forty-second of his age.

His brother John, surnamed *Sans Terre*, or Lackland, who was then in England, succeeded to the throne without opposition. There was, however, a claimant alive, whom John by every means, wished to get rid of; this was Prince Arthur, the son of his brother Geoffrey, who at this time, under the protection, and with the aid of Philip, king of France, had secured to his interest the continental provinces. The war, therefore, which Richard had waged with France was renewed with great animosity, but was of short continuance; for Arthur, on whose account it had been raised, together with his mother Constance, suspecting treachery from the French monarch, threw themselves on the clemency of John. A suspicion better founded, of the more treacherous designs of his uncle, soon after compelled Arthur again to fly to Philip his former protector; hostilities were renewed between France and England, and the brave youth, who ventured to head a little army of his own countrymen, fell once more into the hands of John, who determined to rid himself of all further vexation on that score. The fate of Arthur is uncertain: he was never heard of from the moment of his confinement. The most probable account is, that he was poniarded by John himself, who found in those servants to whom he

gave the murder in charge, a reluctance to execute their horrid commission.* John, whose character had always been disgusting to the English, was now completely detested; and, conscious of the estimation in which he was held by his subjects, he regulated himself, through the whole course of his reign, by those tyrannical maxims of policy, which hold the principle of fear in the subject to be equivalent to affection. Philip, his active rival, in a few successful inroads entirely despoiled him of his continental dominions. He made some pitiful efforts to regain them, which exposed him to the contempt of Europe. In this situation, detested and despised, a controversy with his clergy with regard to the supplying of the vacant see of Canterbury embroiled him with the church, and drew on him the indignation and censure of the pope, who, degrading the prelate whom he had chosen, named another in his place.

John, unwilling to submit to the first stretch of ecclesiastical authority, refused to acquiesce in the pope's nomination, and with the most impolitic violence, sent some of his knights to expel the Augustine monks of Canterbury from their convent, and to take possession of their treasures. Innocent III., who knew his own powers and the weakness of the person with whom he had to contend, sent three English prelates to inform him, that if he persevered in these injurious and

* Hume directly charges John with stabbing Arthur with his own hands.—Hume, chap. x. As also Carte, though he disbelieves some of the particulars, to which Hume attaches credit.—Carte, book vi. 70.

undutiful measures, he would put his dominions under the sentence of an interdict. The threat was disregarded, and the interdict pronounced. By that formidable sentence, a stop was immediately put to divine service through the whole kingdom, and to the administration of all the sacraments, except baptism. The church doors were shut, and the statues of the saints laid upon the ground; the dead were refused burial, and were thrown in the ditches and on the highways. The people were discharged the use of animal food, and debarred from shaving their beards, or giving any attention to their apparel. Every circumstance, in short, seemed calculated to inspire religious terror. It was in vain that John opposed his temporal power to this proof of ecclesiastical authority; the pope seconded his blow by the sentence of excommunication, which absolved the people from all allegiance to his government, and rendered him impious and unfit for human society. John, however, despised, detested, and excommunicated, continued still refractory; he endeavoured to maintain his authority by the most cruel acts of tyranny and violence. The pope, to finish his part, pronounced a sentence of deposition; and, at the same time, made a donation of the kingdom of England to Philip of France, who prepared immediately an immense land and naval armament to take possession of his new territories. But the scheme of the pope was deeper laid; it was by no means his intention that Philip should join England to the dominions of France; his view was to intimidate John into an absolute submission to his authority, from the terror of the

dangers that hung over him. At the same time that he made this donation to Philip, he sent his legate into England, who acquainted John, that it was still in his power to prevent the impending ruin, by putting himself and his kingdom implicitly under the protection of the holy see. John eagerly grasped at the offered condition, and, in a solemn convocation of the nobles and people, took an oath upon his knees, by which, for the expiation of his sins, he surrendered to pope Innocent, and his successors, all his dominions, and every prerogative of his crown, and engaged to hold them as his holiness's vassal for a yearly tribute of a thousand marks.

Philip, incensed at the intelligence of this negotiation, by which he saw the pope had plainly overreached him, determined, notwithstanding, to prosecute the war. An insurrection, however, in his own territories, and a successful attack made upon his fleet by the English admiral, in which four hundred of his ships were taken and destroyed, obliged him entirely to abandon the enterprise.

John was now at ease from foreign hostilities; but he had too plainly manifested his mean and odious character, to hope for the allegiance or quiet submission of his subjects. Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, who had been installed in consequence of the pope's nomination, against the will of the king, and who was his inveterate enemy, had formed a plan for the reformation of the government. A charter, very favourable to the liberties of the people, and tending to abridge the power of the sovereign in many capital articles, had been granted by Henry I. A copy of this

charter, which had never been followed by any substantial effect, came into the possession of Langton, who, in a conference with some of the principal barons, proposed that, on the ground of these concessions from his predecessor, they should insist that John should grant a solemn confirmation and ratification of their liberties and privileges. The barons bound themselves with an oath to support their claims by a vigorous and steady perseverance. An application was drawn up and presented to the sovereign, who, unwilling to yield, and yet unable to refuse, appealed to the holy see. The pope had now an interest to support his vassal, and he wrote instantly to England, requiring, by his supreme authority, that all confederacies among the barons, which tended to disturb the peace of the kingdom, should be immediately put an end to. This requisition met with its just disregard. The associated barons had taken the most effectual measures to enforce their claims. They had assembled an army of two thousand knights, and a very numerous body of foot. With these forces they surrounded the residence of the court, which was then at Oxford, and, transmitting to the king a scroll of the chief articles of their demand, they were answered, that he had solemnly sworn never to comply with any one of them. They proceeded immediately to hostilities, laid siege to Northampton, took the town of Bedford, and marched to London, where they were received with the acclamations of all ranks of the people. The king, who found his partisans daily abandoning him, began now to talk in a more submissive strain. He offered, first to sub-

mit all differences to the pope; and this being peremptorily refused, he at length acquainted the confederates, that it was his supreme pleasure to grant all their demands. At Runnymede, between Staines and Windsor, a spot which will be deemed sacred to the latest posterity, a solemn conference was held between John and the assembled barons of England, when, after a very short debate, the king signed and sealed that great charter, which is at this day the foundation and bulwark of English liberty—MAGNA CHARTA.

The substance of this important charter is as follows. The clergy were allowed a free election to all vacant church preferments, the king renouncing his power of presentation. Every person aggrieved in ecclesiastical matters was allowed a freedom of appeal to the pope, and for that purpose allowance was given to every man to go out of the kingdom at pleasure. The fines upon churchmen for any offence were ordained to be proportional to their temporal, not their ecclesiastical possessions. The barons were secured in the custody of the vacant abbeys and their dependent convents. The reliefs or duties to be paid for earldoms, baronies, and knights' fees, were fixed at a rated sum, according to their value, whereas before they had been arbitrary. It was decreed that barons should recover the lands of their vassals forfeited for felony, after being a year and a day in possession of the crown: that they should enjoy the wardships of their military tenants, who held other lands of the crown by a different tenure; that a person knighted by the king, though a minor, should enjoy the privileges of a

man come of age, provided he was a ward of the crown. It was enacted, that heirs should marry without any disparagement, that is, that no sum should be demanded by the superior or overlord upon the marriage of his vassal. No scutage or tax was to be imposed upon the people, but by the great council of the nation, except in three particular cases—the king's captivity, the knighting his eldest son, and the marriage of his eldest daughter. When the great council was to be assembled, the prelates, earls, and great barons were to be called to it by a particular writ, the lesser barons by a summons from the sheriff. It was ordained that the king should not seize any baron's lands for a debt to the crown, if the baron possessed personal property sufficient to discharge the debt. No vassal was allowed to sell so much of his land as to incapacitate him from performing the necessary service to his lord.

With respect to the people, the following were the principal clauses calculated for their benefit. It was ordained that all the privileges and immunities granted by the king to his barons should be also granted by the barons to their vassals. That one *weight* and one *measure* should be observed throughout the kingdom. That merchants should be allowed to transact all business without being exposed to any arbitrary tolls or impositions; that they, and all freemen, should be allowed to go out of the kingdom and return to it at pleasure. London, and all cities and boroughs, shall preserve their ancient liberties, immunities, and free customs. Aids or taxes shall not be required of them, except by the consent of the great

council. No towns or individuals shall be obliged to make or support bridges, unless it has been the immemorial custom. The goods of every freeman shall be disposed of according to his will or testament; if he die intestate, his heirs at law shall succeed to them. The king's courts of justice shall be stationary, and shall no longer follow his person; they shall be open to every one, and justice shall no longer be bought, refused, or delayed by them. The sheriffs shall be incapacitated to determine pleas of the crown, and shall not put any person upon his trial from rumour or suspicion alone, but upon the evidence of lawful witnesses. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his free tenements or liberties, or outlawed or banished, or any way hurt or injured, *unless by the legal judgment of his peers*, or by the *law of the land;* and all who suffered otherwise in this and the former reigns, shall be restored to their rights and possessions. Every freeman shall be fined in proportion to his fault, and no fine shall be levied on him to his utter ruin.

Such were the stipulations in favour of the higher orders of the state, the barons, the clergy, the landholders, and freemen. But that part of the people who tilled the ground, who constituted, in all probability, the majority of the nation, seem to have been very lightly considered in this great charter of freedom. They had but one single clause in their favour, which stipulated that no villain or rustic should by any fine be bereaved of his carts, his ploughs, and instruments of husbandry; in other respects they were considered as a part of a property belonging to an estate, and

were transferable along with the horses, cows, and other moveables, at the will of the owner. John, at the same time that he signed the Magna Charta, was compelled by the barons to sign the Charta de Foresta, a deed of a most important nature to the liberties of the subject. William the Conqueror, we have remarked, had reserved to himself the exclusive privilege of killing game over all England, and the penalties on any subject encroaching upon this right of the sovereign were most oppressive and tyrannical. The most rigorous of these penalties were abolished by the Charta de Foresta; pecuniary fines were substituted for death and demembration. Those woods and forests that had been taken from their proprietors in the former reigns were now restored to them, and every man was left at liberty to enclose his woods, or to convert them into arable land at his pleasure.

The barons, in order to secure the observance of these important charters, prevailed likewise on John, who was ready to grant everything, that twenty-five of their own number should be appointed conservators of the public liberty. The ease with which John had made all these concessions was entirely a piece of simulation on the part of that treacherous prince. The barons were lulled into security, and had disbanded their forces, without taking any measures for reassembling them, while John, in the meantime, had privately enlisted a large body of foreign troops, Germans, Brabantines, and Flemings, who, landing in the kingdom, immediately commenced hostilities. An English army, headed by the earl of Salisbury,

was likewise in the king's interest; and by these acting in different parts at the same time, storming every citadel which refused to acknowledge the king's absolute authority, and burning, massacring, and plundering in every quarter, the whole kingdom was a scene of horror and devastation.

The barons, unable to act in concert or to raise an army that could stand before these ravagers, were reduced to the desperate measure of entreating aid from France. Philip immediately despatched his eldest son Louis, at the head of an army of 7000 men. The barons became bound to acknowledge him as their lawful sovereign; and the first effect of his appearance in the kingdom was the desertion of a very large part of John's foreign troops, who refused to serve against the heir of their master. Louis advanced to London, where he received the submissions of the people, who took the oath of fealty; but discoveries were soon made that tended at once to withdraw the English from all allegiance to their foreign master. One of the French courtiers (the Viscount de Melun) had declared upon his deathbed that he knew, from the mouth of Louis, that it was his intention to exterminate entirely the English barons, and to bestow their estates and dignities upon his own French subjects. This, though a most improbable scheme, received some confirmation from the visible partiality that Louis already showed to his foreign subjects. The most powerful of the nobility took the alarm immediately; they even chose to join their unworthy sovereign, rather than be the dupes and victims of a treacherous foreigner. John, with these aids, was resolved to make a vigorous

effort for the preservation of his crown. But this vicious tyrant, from whom England could in no situation have ever received benefit, was cut off by a fever at Newark. Henry III., his son, a boy of nine years of age, was immediately crowned at Bristol, under the auspices of the earl of Pembroke, mareschal of England, who was at the same time appointed guardian of the king and protector of the realm. The disaffected barons, whose object of hatred and enmity was now removed, returned cheerfully to their allegiance. Louis found himself deserted by all his partisans among the English; an engagement ensued, in which the French troops were defeated; and their prince, finding his cause to be daily declining, was glad at last to conclude a peace with the protector, and entirely to evacuate the kingdom.

CHAPTER IX.

State of Europe in the Thirteenth Century—The Crusades.

While these eventful transactions were carrying on in England, and John, by compulsion, was making those concessions to his barons, which a wise and a good prince would not have thought it injurious to regal dignity to have voluntarily granted, a young emperor had been elected in Germany, and enjoyed the throne which Otho IV. had resigned before his death; this was Frederic II., son of the emperor Henry VI. The emperors, at this time, were much more powerful than their neighbouring monarchs of France; for, besides Suabia, and the other extensive territories which Frederic had in Germany, he likewise possessed Naples and Sicily by inheritance; and Lombardy, though sometimes struggling for independence, had long been considered as an appanage of the empire.

The pope reigned absolute in Rome, where all the municipal magistrates were subject to his control and authority. Milan, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, Padua, Ferrara, and almost all the cities of Romagna, had, under the pope's protection, entered into a confederacy against the emperor. Cremona, Bergamo, Modena, Parma, Reggio, and Trent were of the imperial party.

These opposite interests produced the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline, which for a length of time embroiled all Italy in divisions, and split towns and even families into parties. The Guelphs stood up for the supremacy of the pope, the Ghibellines for that of the emperor.

Frederic II., by his policy and his arms, carried on a vigorous contest with four popes successively, without bringing any of them to submission. By two of these popes, Gregory IX. and Innocent IV., he was excommunicated and solemnly deposed; but Frederic kept possession of his throne and maintained his independence. In consequence of the last sentence of deposition, he wrote in the most spirited manner, to all the princes of Germany. "I am not the first," says he, "whom the clergy have treated so unworthily, and I shall not be the last. But you are the cause of it, by obeying those hypocrites, whose ambition, you are sensible, is carried beyond all bounds. How many infamous actions may you not discover in the court of Rome! While those pontiffs are abandoned to the vices of the age, and intoxicated with pleasure, the greatness of their wealth extinguishes in their minds all sense of religion. It is, therefore, a work of charity to deprive them of those pernicious treasures which are their ruin; and in this cause you ought all to co-operate with me."

Innocent IV. endeavoured by every engine in his power to excite the Germans to rebel against this spirited emperor. Conspiracies were formed against his life—assassins hired to murder him—and several attempts made to cut him off by

poison. Of all these iniquitous proceedings he made loud complaints, which the pope never gave himself the trouble of answering. Whether these machinations were in the end effectual is not certainly known; but Frederic, after a life of much disquiet, died at Naples in the fifty-second year of his age, and thirty-eighth of his reign.

For eighteen years after the death of Frederic II., the Germanic empire was without a sovereign, and was rent by incessant factions and divisions. Yet, distracted as they were among themselves, The Germans allowed the pope to gain nothing by their situation. Italy, indeed, was equally a prey to factions, which gave the popes too much to do at home to think of meddling with the affairs of a distant kingdom. France was still weak, and Spain was divided between the Christians and Mahometans. England, as we have seen, was a miserable theatre of civil war and anarchy. Yet, at this period, distracted as appears to have been the face of all Europe, one great scheme or project seems to have given a species of union to this discordant mass; a project from the issue of which arose new kingdoms, new establishments, and a new system of manners. This was the crusades, or holy wars, of which we now proceed to give a short account.

We have mentioned the irruption of the Turks, or Turcomans, upon the empire of the caliphs. The manners of these Turcomans were like those of most of the other tribes from the north of Asia; that is to say, they were freebooters, who lived by plunder, and had no strong attachment to any country. The Turks, it is probable, came

from those regions beyond Mount Taurus and Imaus, and were, therefore, a race of Tartars. About the eleventh century they made an irruption upon Muscovy, and came down upon the banks of the Caspian Sea. The imprudent policy of the Arabians themselves first introduced these strangers into their empire, who were destined to overthrow it. One of the caliphs, grandson of Haroun Alraschid, hired a body of Turks to be his life-guards; this gave them some name and reputation; they gradually increased in number, and acquired influence in the civil wars which took place on occasion of the succession to the caliphate. The caliphs of the race of the Abassidæ were deprived, by the caliphs of the race of Fatima, of Syria, Egypt, and Africa; and the Turks subdued at last, and stripped of their dominions, both the Abassidæ and the Fatimites.

Bagdad, the seat of the empire of the caliphs, was taken by the Turks in the year 1055, and these conquerors followed the same commendable policy with the Franks, the Goths, and Normans, in accommodating themselves to the laws and manners of the conquered people. From this period, the caliphs, from being temporal monarchs, became only the heads or supreme pontiffs of the Mahometan religion, as the popes of the Christian; but the difference was, that the caliphs were sinking from their ancient dignity, while the popes were daily advancing in power and splendour. At the time of the first crusade, Arabia was under a Turkish sultan, though the caliph still retained his rank and nominal importance. Persia and Asia Minor were likewise governed

by Turkish usurpers; the empire of Constantinople had been in some degree of lustre under Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and under Nicephorus Phocas; but the succeeding princes weakened and reduced it to a shadow. Michael Paphlagonatus lost Sicily, and Romanus Diogenes almost all that remained in the east, unless the kingdom of Pontus; and that province, which is now called Turcomania, fell soon after into the hands of Solyman the Turk, who being now master of the greatest part of Asia Minor, established the seat of his empire at Nicæa, and began to threaten Constantinople at the time of the commencement of the first crusade.

The Greek empire, thus circumscribed in Asia, comprehended, however, on the European side, all Greece, Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus, and Illyria, and the isle of Crete, now Candia. The city of Constantinople itself was populous, opulent, and voluptuous. Its inhabitants styled themselves not Greeks, but Romans, and the people of Rome, whom they termed Latins, were, in their opinion, a set of barbarians, who had revolted from them and shaken off their authority.

The territory of Palestine, or the Holy Land, appears to have been over-stocked with inhabitants, great numbers of whom had dispersed themselves into different parts of Asia and Africa, where they applied to traffic with uncommon spirit for those rude ages.

When Omar, the successor of Mahomet, seized on the fertile country of Syria, he took possession of Palestine; and as the Mahometans esteemed Jerusalem a holy city, Omar built there a magni-

ficent mosque. Jerusalem at this time contained about seven or eight thousand inhabitants, whose chief wealth arose from the charitable donations of pilgrims, both Christians and Mahometans; for the latter paid a degree of veneration to the mosque of Omar, as well as the Christians to the holy sepulchre.

A pilgrim, to whom history has given the name of Peter the Hermit, first raised up that spirit of THE CRUSADES which inflamed all Europe. This man, who was a native of Amiens, had travelled into the Holy Land, where he had suffered much oppression from the Turks. At his return to Rome, he complained in such high terms of the grievances to which the Christian pilgrims were subjected, that Urban II. thought him a very fit person to set on foot the grand design which the popes had long entertained of arming the whole Christian world against the infidels; and Urban himself convoked a general council at Placentia, where the project was proposed and highly approved of; but from the occupation which the Italian nobility found at that time at home, no active measure followed this approbation. The French possessed more of the spirit of adventure than the Italians. The design was no sooner proposed in a council, held at Clermont, in Auvergne, than they took up arms with the most enthusiastic emulation. The principal nobles immediately sold their lands to raise money for the expedition, and the church bought them at an easy rate, and thus acquired immense territorial possessions: even the poorest barons set out upon their own charges, and the vassals attended the standard

of their lords. Besides these, whom we may suppose to have been influenced by the piety of the design, an innumerable multitude, a motley assemblage of beggars, slaves, malefactors, strumpets, debauchees, and profligates of all kinds, joined the throng, and hoped to find in those scenes of holy carnage and desolation, means of making their fortune by plunder.* A general rendezvous was appointed at Constantinople. Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Brabant, a lineal descendant of Charlemagne, was, from his great military character, chosen to command an army of seventy thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, all armed completely, in steel. Above eighty thousand ranged themselves under the banner of Peter the Hermit, who walked at their head with a rope about his waist, and sandals on his feet. Peter's lieutenant was Walter the Pennyless, and in the van of his troop were carried a sacred goose, and a goat, which (monstrous to believe!) were said to be filled with the Holy Ghost. This immense and disorderly multitude began their march towards the East in the year 1095. They made the first essay of their arms, not upon the unbelievers, but on their fellow Christians. The first exploit which signalized the expedition was the taking of a small Christian city in Hungary, which had refused to starve its own inhabitants by supplying such a tribe of

* Many of these miscreants had their own motives of piety. Mr. Gibbon's observation has both truth and wit in it. "At the voice of their pastor, the robber, the incendiary, the homicide arose by thousands to redeem their souls, by repeating on the infidels the same deeds which they had exercised against their Christian brethren."—GIBBON, ch. lxviii.

hungry locusts with provisions. This impious city was stormed and pillaged, and the inhabitants massacred. Another band of these adventurers were employed, in the meantime, in putting to death all the Jews wherever they could find them. The consequence of these abominable proceedings was, that the crusaders were considered as enemies wherever they passed, and most of the countries rose in arms to oppose their progress. No less than three different armies were cut to pieces in Hungary. Peter the Hermit, however, found his way to Constantinople, where Alexius Comnenus was at that time emperor—a prince of great wisdom and moderation, which he clearly manifested by his conduct to the crusaders. Dreading the consequences of that spirit of enthusiasm which had put in motion such immense multitudes, Alexius, though with much reluctance, thought it his wisest policy to put on the appearance of friendship, and to allow them a free passage through the imperial dominions into Asia. Anna Comnena, the daughter of Alexius, an accomplished princess, who has excellently written the history of her own time, relates many circumstances which strongly mark the rude, uncivilized, and brutal spirit of those heroes or chieftains who figured in those romantic expeditions; among the rest is one anecdote extremely characteristical. The chiefs of the crusade being admitted to an audience of the emperor, who was seated on his throne, amidst all the pomp of Eastern magnificence, one of these captains, a Frank count, stepping up to the throne, seated himself by the emperor's side, saying in the Frank language,

"What a pretty fellow of an emperor is this, who places himself above such men as we are!" Earl Baldwin, one of the crusaders, ashamed of this unmannerly insolence of his countryman, rose immediately, and, pulling him from his seat, thrust him out of the assembly. Alexius, with much prudence, expressed no resentment at daily instances of similar brutality; he took a wiser course, he hastened to get rid of his troublesome guests by furnishing them with every necessary aid; and he fitted out his vessels immediately to transport them across the Bosphorus. They landed in Asia, and marched on with the utmost alacrity to meet the infidels: but Solyman, the sultan of Nicæa, gave them a very fatal check. The greatest part of those immense numbers which had ranged themselves under the Hermit's standard were cut to pieces. The Turks preserved all the women for their seraglios;—for men, women, and children had taken up the cross and embarked in the expedition.

In the mean time, a new swarm of crusaders, to the amount of several hundred thousands, had arrived at Constantinople. These were commanded by Godfrey of Bouillon, by Raymond, count of Thoulouse, by Hugh, brother of Philip I. of France, by Robert, duke of Normandy, eldest son of William the Conqueror, and several of the most considerable princes of Europe, most of whom had mortgaged and even sold their territories to supply themselves with money for the expedition. It was otherwise with the brave Bohemond, son of Robert Guiscard, the conqueror of Sicily; he had no estates, for his father had dis-

inherited him. It was, therefore, an expedition in which he had nothing to lose, and might possibly gain; he had formerly fought with success against the empire of Constantinople, and was more dreaded by the Greeks than all the rest of these adventurers. Bohemond was attended by his cousin, the gallant and accomplished Tancred, whose merits, amplified by fiction, make a conspicuous figure in the fine poem of Tasso, the "Gierusalemme Liberata."

Such immense and seemingly inexhaustible torrents pouring down upon Constantinople, gave, as we may naturally suppose, very great uneasiness to the emperor Alexius. Excellent politician as he was, he found it impossible to prevent continual differences and a great deal of bloodshed. The crusaders imagined that the piety and merit of the undertaking gave them a just claim to be maintained and supported gratuitously by all who professed themselves to be Christians. They behaved with insufferable insolence and folly; and matters came at length to that extremity, that it was seriously proposed by these new crusaders to begin operations against the infidels, by the destruction of Constantinople, the capital of the Christian world in the East. This storm, however, was averted by the emperor Alexius. He once more furnished the crusaders with all they wanted, loaded them even with presents and transported them into Asia. The army was reviewed near to Nicæa, where it was found to consist of 600,000 foot, including women, and 100,000 horse. We have no accounts transmitted to us how such multitudes procured subsistence when

once they had come into a hostile country. It is difficult to conceive that they could have procured it by plunder, without such a total dispersion as must have rendered all their enterprises ineffectual against such a formidable enemy as the Mahometans. The Venetians refused to send their vessels to supply them with provisions, because they made very great profits at this time by trading with the Mahometans. The merchants of Genoa and Pisa indeed sent their ships, laden with stores, to the coasts of Asia Minor, where they made immense profits by selling them to the crusaders; and to this cause has been attributed the first rise of the Genoese wealth and splendour. But, after all, these resources were extremely inadequate, and it is highly probable that the greatest part of the calamities and misfortunes which the crusaders underwent must have arisen from a scarcity of provisions.

The Turks and Arabians were at first unable to stand the shock of such prodigious multitudes, whose armour gave them likewise a very great advantage; for at this time it was customary not only for the horseman, but his horse, to be clothed entirely in iron. The Turks were twice defeated, and Bohemond made himself master of the country of Antioch. Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, penetrated into Mesopotamia, and took the city of Edessa. At length they appeared before Jerusalem; and though famine, sickness, and great losses, even by their victories, had reduced their immense army to twenty thousand men, they resolutely attacked a garrison of forty thousand, and after a siege of five weeks

took the city by storm. The whole inhabitants, soldiers and citizens, men, women, and children, who were either Mahometans or Jews, were put to the sword. It is affirmed by all the historians that, after this inhuman massacre, the Christians went in solemn procession to the place where they were told was the sepulchre of our Saviour, and there burst into a flood of tears.* This

* The effect produced on the mind by the first view of those most venerable monuments of the origin of our holy religion is well described by the abbé Mariti, in his "Travels through Cyrus, Syria, and Palestine." "The sepulchre of Christ, which is open only on solemn days, is in the church of the Resurrection. All pilgrims and devotees come hither to celebrate the holy mysteries, under the protection of the governor, who sends a party of soldiers to escort them, and they enter the church in procession, with the sound of plaintive music. On this occasion I think it would be difficult for any person, of whatever religion, not to be inspired with sentiments of reverence and awe on the sight of this most august temple. Gloomy, and of an immense size, it is lighted principally by the lamps which are suspended from its roof. The pilasters are become black by length of years, and no ornaments are to be seen on its walls. The altars and statues of the saints are of coarse stone, and the chandeliers of wood. Every thing used here for religious service is in the simplest and plainest taste. In a word, this church is poor, but it is what a church ought to be. The Deity requires only from man purity of heart and an exemplary life. The company of devotees bend before the stone of unction which served for embalming the body of Christ when it was brought down from Mount Calvary, and repeat a prayer; after which the priests and assistants worship the cross. Near this is the chapel of the Annunciation, where the officiating priest sits down, and presents his hand to be kissed, while different hymns are chaunted before the altars which bear the names of the different mysteries of the Catholic church. The air of humility and attention with which this service is performed is truly affecting."

mixture of barbarity and cruelty with the tender feelings is derided by some authors, and especially Voltaire, as something out of nature, and scarcely possible; but when it is considered what was the motive of many of these men, the enthusiasm which animated them in a cause which they were persuaded was to conduct them to heaven, the contending feelings with which they were agitated, detestation for those infidels who, as they imagined, had polluted by their impious worship the most sacred monuments of their religion, and joy and gratitude for the recovery and vindication of those venerable remains, we shall find nothing in the deportment of these crusaders but what is natural and consistent with their situation. The only just reflection that can arise from this fact is, the conviction that there is no engine so powerful in its operation on the human mind as religion, which can reconcile the same man to what are seemingly the most opposite extremes.

The Holy Land was thus recovered by the Christians, and Godfrey of Bouillon obtained the title of king of Jerusalem; but it was only a title, for a papal legate arriving in the meantime, claimed the city as the property of God, and took possession of it as such. Godfrey reserved the port of Joppa, and some privileges in Jerusalem.

The crusaders began now to be divided among themselves. They had formed three petty states in Asia, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Edessa; and some years after, a fourth, which was that of Tripoli in Syria, in the conquest of which the Venetians had some share; they lent their ships, and stipulated in return for a part of the conquered

territory. Even these little states were divided, and almost every small town had a lord or a count for its sovereign. There were counts of Joppa, and marquises of Galilee, Sidon, Acra, and Cesarea.

The Turks, in the meantime, were not exterminated from the holy land; on the contrary, they possessed many considerable garrisons, and were continually annoying the Christians, whose strength and numbers were daily diminishing. A new swarm of adventurers, however, set out from the West in the year 1146; that is, about fifty years from the period of the departure of the first crusade. Their numbers are computed to have been about two hundred thousand. This immense body, consisting of Italians, Germans, and French, marched under the command of Hugh, brother to Philip I. of France. These met with the same fate which we have seen attended the army of Peter the Hermit. The Turks cut them entirely to pieces, and Hugh, their leader, died helpless and abandoned in Asia. The situation of Jerusalem at this time was extremely weak; the numbers of the garrison were greatly reduced. Even the monks, who were at first instituted to serve the sick and wounded, were obliged to arm in the common defence, and they associated themselves into a military society, called Templars and Hospitallers. This was the origin of these two orders of knights, who afterwards signalized themselves by their exploits, and, becoming rivals, fought *against each other* with as much keenness as ever they had done against the infidels.

In the meantime pope Eugenius III. despatched St. Bernard, a furious and enthusiastic monk, to

preach a new crusade in France, which kindled up a flame through the whole kingdom. Louis VII., surnamed *the young*, who was then on the throne, set the example himself by taking the cross, and, in conjunction with Conrad III., emperor of Germany, appeared at the head of three hundred thousand men. The Germans set out first, and, jealous of the French sharing in their glory, had no sooner arrived in Asia than they began hostilities; but the sultan of Iconium, a very able prince, drew them artfully into disadvantageous ground, and with very little trouble cut them all to pieces. Conrad, in the disguise of a pilgrim, fled to Antioch; the enterprise of Louis the Young met with the same fate. Rashness, and an absurd contempt of their enemies, joined to a total ignorance of the country in which they fought, exposed the French army to innumerable hardships, and they were at length totally defeated among the rocks of Laodicea. Louis, who had carried his young wife, Eleanor of Guienne, along with him, had the addition of domestic distress to his misfortunes. That lady's gallantries were so notorious, that Louis thought it necessary to divorce her. Thus, his expedition to the Holy Land cost him not only his great army, but the loss of Poitou, the patrimonial inheritance of his queen, and one of the finest provinces of his dominions. Conrad returned alone to Germany; and thus ended the second crusade, yet more disastrous than the first. It is computed that the number of Europeans who, in both these expeditions, left their country and perished in the East, amounted to one million six hundred thousand.

The Turks and Christians in Palestine were, in the meantime, mutually exterminating and destroying each other, when a new character appeared on the stage, who, in all respects, was one of the greatest men who have adorned the annals of the world; this was Saladin, the nephew of Noureddin, the sultan of Egypt. In a very short space of time he had overrun Syria, Arabia, Persia, and Mesopotamia, and now formed the design of the conquest of Jerusalem, then under the dominion of the Christian prince, Guy of Lusignan.

Lusignan, with what slender forces he could assemble, made the best resistance possible; but his army was defeated, Jerusalem taken, and he himself made prisoner. Saladin treated him with the utmost humanity and generosity. An incident is recorded of this hero, which is extremely characteristic. He invited his royal prisoner to a banquet, and with his own hand presented him a cup of liquor, which Lusignan, after having drank, offered to Rainauld de Chatillon, one of his captains. While Chatillon was raising the cup to his lips, Saladin, immediately rising from his seat, struck off his head with the sabre. When Lusignan expressed his horror and astonishment at this action, he was told that it was an ancient custom of the Arabians never to put to death those prisoners to whom they had once given meat or drink; but that Chatillon was a perjured wretch, unworthy of clemency, whom Saladin had devoted to punishment.

On Saladin's making his entry into Jerusalem, the women, who hoped to move him to compas-

sion, threw themselves at his feet, entreating for mercy to their captive fathers, husbands, and children; but the generous nature of this conqueror needed no entreaty to prompt to an exertion of humanity: he spared the lives of all his prisoners; he restored to the Christians the church of the Holy Sepulchre; and though attached himself to the faith of Mahomet, he permitted no injury to be offered to the vanquished in the exercise of their religion. He even granted Lusignan his liberty, on his swearing never to take up arms against his deliverer; but Lusignan shamefully violated his oath, and prepared himself for a new attack upon his conqueror. The Christians, in the mean time, lost almost all their possessions in Asia; and pope Clement III., alarmed at the victories of Saladin, began to rouse up a new crusade for the Holy Land, from France, Germany, and England, while another was destined to extirpate the Pagans from the North of Europe. This northern crusade, it is supposed, consumed about one hundred thousand Christians, besides the infidels they destroyed.

Philip Augustus, then king of France; Frederic Barbarossa, emperor of Germany; and Richar Cœur de Lion, king of England, took up the cross at the same time, and armed prodigious multitudes from their several dominions. Frederic lost his life in Asia by bathing, while heated, in the Cydnus: his army, which amounted to 150,000 men, by frequent losses was so reduced that his son, the duke of Suabia, could collect no more than seven or eight thousand, with whom he joined himself to Lusignan. Richard and Philip,

on reviewing their forces at Ptolemais in Syria, where they joined the nominal king of Jerusalem and the duke of Suabia, found the total amount of their army to be above 300,000 men. Ptolemais was taken; but the duke of Suabia died, and Philip and Richard, mutually jealous of each other's glory, and ever at variance, could do nothing effective while united. Their disgust rose to such a height, that Philip, over whom Richard, on all occasions, had assumed a superiority, thought proper to return to his own dominions.

Richard was now left sole competitor with the illustrious Saladin, and had the honour of defeating him in battle and dismounting him from his horse; but his victories were without effect; his army was reduced by famine, sickness, and fatigues, and on arriving at Jerusalem, which he flattered himself with recovering from the infidels, he found his force so inferior, that he was obliged to abandon the enterprise, and to make his escape from Palestine in a single vessel. What was his fate in Germany, and the misfortunes that succeeded, have been already related in treating of the English history during the reign of this romantic monarch. Soon after died the illustrious Saladin, leaving behind him the character not only of one of the most heroic, but of one of the best of princes. In his last illness, instead of the imperial ensigns which used to adorn the gates of his palace, he ordered a winding-sheet to be hung up, while a slave proclaimed, with a loud voice, "This is all that Saladin, the conqueror of the East, has obtained by his victories!" He bequeathed, by his last will, a large sum of money to be distributed

equally among the poor, whether they were Mahometans, Christians, or Jews, intending, as Voltaire well remarks, to teach, by his bequest, that all men are brethren, and that when we assist them we ought not to inquire what they *believe*, but what they *feel*.

This great prince died in the year 1195. The passion for religious warfare was not yet extinguished in Europe; a new expedition was fitted out in the year 1202, under Baldwin, count of Flanders, consisting of about 40,000 men. The object of this crusade was different from all the rest, and its leaders, under the cloak of a holy war, proposed, instead of extirpating the infidels, to dethrone the emperor of Constantinople, and put an end to the empire of the East. Isaac Angelus, the emperor, had been deprived of his liberty by his brother Alexius; but his son maintained a considerable party in his interest, and the crusaders offered him their assistance to regain the empire. The prince disgusted both parties of his countrymen, by accepting the aid of foreigners, and the consequence was, that he was strangled by one of his own relations. Baldwin and his army, on pretence of revenging his death, laid siege to Constantinople: he took it almost without resistance. The crusaders put all that opposed them to the sword; and it is remarked, as strongly characteristic of a spirit of national levity, that the French, immediately after a scene of massacre and pillage, celebrated a splendid ball, and danced with the ladies of Constantinople in the sanctuary of the church of St. Sophia. Thus Constantinople was taken for the first time, sacked, and plundered by

the Christians. Baldwin was elected emperor, and the imperial dominions were divided between him and the other leaders of the crusade. The Venetians, who had furnished both ships and troops, got for their share the Peloponnesus, the isle of Candia (ancient Crete,) and several cities on the coast of Phrygia. The marquis of Monferrat took Thessaly, and the pope became, for a time, the head of the Eastern, as he was of the Western church. Of all the numbers who had taken up the cross in this crusade, a very few found their way into the Holy Land, under Simon de Montfort; but they did nothing effectual. The imperial family of the Comneni was not extinguished in the fall of the Eastern empire. One of them, Alexius, escaped with some ships to Colchis, and founded there, between the sea and Mount Caucasus, a small state, which he called the empire of Trebizond. Another state, dignified likewise with the title of empire, was founded by Theodore Lascarius, who retook Nicæa. Other Greeks formed a league with the Turks and Bulgarians, and with their assistance dethroned the new emperor Baldwin and, cutting off his legs and arms, exposed him to be devoured by wild beasts.

Notwithstanding the miserable termination of all these religious enterprises, the enthusiastic spirit was still as violent as ever, and a new expedition was fitted out to establish John de Brienne as king of Jerusalem, of which the throne happened now to be vacant. An army of 100,000 excellent troops, French, Hungarians, and Germans, landed at Ptolemais, in Palestine, while Saphadin, sultan of Egypt, the brother of Saladin, had left his do-

minion to lay waste the Holy Land. It seemed a tempting enterprise for the crusaders to make reprisals upon Egypt, and accordingly they left the Christians in Palestine to defend themselves, and set sail for Damietta, the ancient Pelusium. The siege of this city employed them no less than two years; and after it was taken it was lost by the folly of the pope's legate, who pretended, that in right of his master he had a title to regulate the disposition of the army as well as the church. By his orders they were encamped between two branches of the Nile, at the very time when it began its periodical inundation. The sultan of Egypt assisted its operation by a little art, and, by means of canals and sluices, contrived entirely to deluge the Christians on one side, while he burnt their ships on the other. In this extremity they entreated an accommodation, and agreed to restore Damietta and return into Phœnicia, leaving their king, John de Brienne, as an hostage. John, however, soon after got his liberty; and, by a very strange vicissitude of fortune, coming to the assistance of Constantinople during an interregnum after the death of Baldwin, was elected emperor of the East. He gave his daughter in marriage to Frederic II., emperor of Germany, along with his right to the kingdom of Jerusalem. This politic prince was very sensible that nothing was to be made by crusades; he therefore concluded a treaty with the sultan Meladin, by which he secured the right to Jerusalem, Nazareth, and some villages, and agreed to relinquish all the rest.

Such was the state of affairs in the East, and such was the small fruit of so much bloodshed, when

a very great revolution took place in Asia. Genghis-khan, with his Tartars, broke down from the countries beyond Caucasus, Taurus, and Mount Imaus. They first fell upon the inhabitants of Chorassan, a province of Persia, who, being forced to abandon their own country, precipitated themselves upon Syria, and put all to the sword, Christians, Turks, and Jews indiscriminately. The Christians united to repel these invaders, and the templars, the hospitallers, and the Teutonic knights, (a new order formed by the German pilgrims,) signalized themselves in some desperate efforts of resistance; but the Christians were entirely defeated. They retained still a few places on the sea-coast; but their affairs were, on the whole, in the most wretched situation, when Louis IX. of France, distinguished by the title of Saint Louis, prevented for a while their entire extirpation, by fitting out the last crusade.

Louis was a prince in every respect formed to render his subjects happy, and to repair, by his political and economical talents, the misfortunes which his country had sustained during the course of a century and a half, by those ruinous expeditions to the East. But unfortunately, in the delirium of a fever, he fancied that he had received a summons from heaven to take up the cross against the infidels; and neither the return of his reason, the entreaties of his queen, nor the remonstrances of his counsellors could divert him from that fatal project. He employed four years in preparing for the expedition, and set out with his queen, his three brothers, and their wives, and all the knights of France, with a prodigious number

of their vassals and attendants. On arriving at Cyprus he was joined by the king of that island, and, proceeding to Egypt, they began the campaign with expelling the barbarians from Damietta. Here they were reinforced by a new army from France amounting to 60,000 men, and Melecsala, the sultan of Egypt, thought it his wisest course to sue for peace, which, however, was refused him. This denial the Christians had soon abundant reason to repent, for half of their immense army perished by sickness, and the other half was defeated by Almoadin, the son of Melecsala. Louis himself, with two of his brothers, were taken prisoners, and the third was killed in the engagement. Louis offered a million of besants in gold for the ransom of himself and his fellow-prisoners; and such was the uncommon generosity of this infidel prince, that he remitted to him a fifth part of the sum. Louis paid his ransom and returned to his dominions, where, for thirteen years, he employed himself in all the duties of a wise and virtuous prince; but his passion for the crusades returned with double violence. The pope encouraged him by granting him a tenth penny out of the revenues of the clergy for three years; and he set out a second time with nearly the same force as before. But his brother, Charles of Anjou, whom the pope had made king of Naples and Sicily, turned the course of his arms to Africa instead of Palestine. Charles's ambition was to seize the dominions of the king of Tunis, and Louis joined in the enterprise, from an earnest desire of converting that prince and his subjects to Christianity: both were unsuccessful in their aims. The Christians were

besieged in their camp by the Moors, and the unfortunate Louis, after losing one of his sons by the plague, fell a victim himself to the same distemper. His brother, the king of Sicily, concluded a peace with the Moors, and some few of the Christian troops who survived that mortal contagion were brought back to Europe. In these two unfortunate expeditions of Louis IX., it is computed that there perished 100,000 men; 50,000 had perished under Frederic Barbarossa; 300,000 under Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur de Lion; 200,000 in the time of John de Brienne; and 160,000 had before been sacrificed in Asia, besides those that had perished in the expedition to Constantinople. Thus, without mentioning a crusade in the North, and that afterwards to be taken notice of against the Albigenses, it is a reasonable computation to estimate that two millions of Europeans, in these expeditions, were buried in the East.

END OF VOL. IV.

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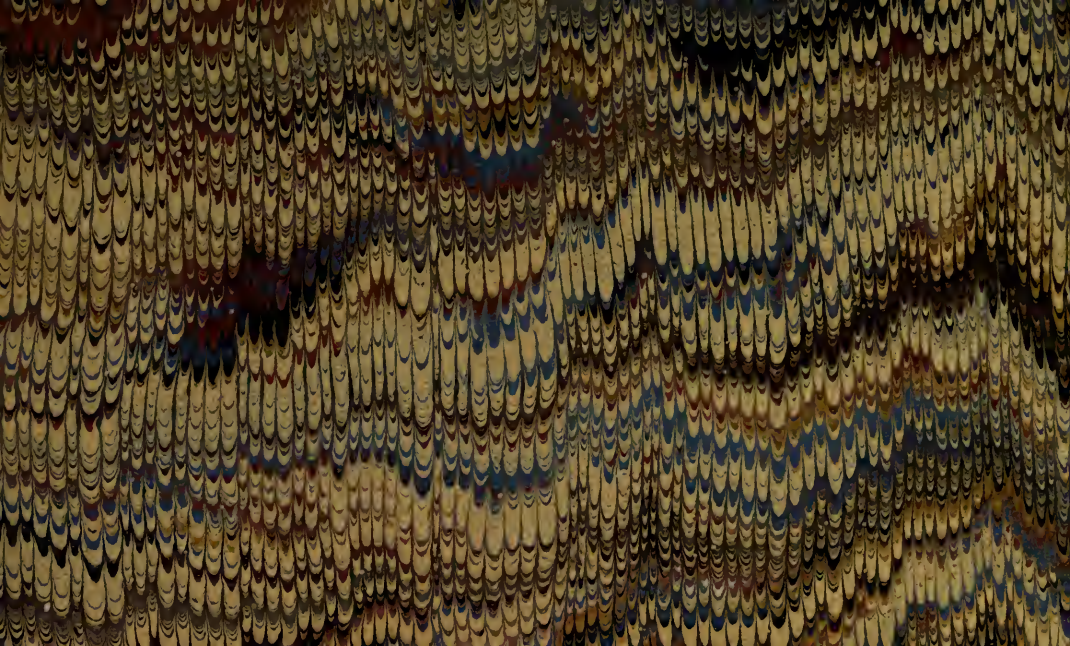
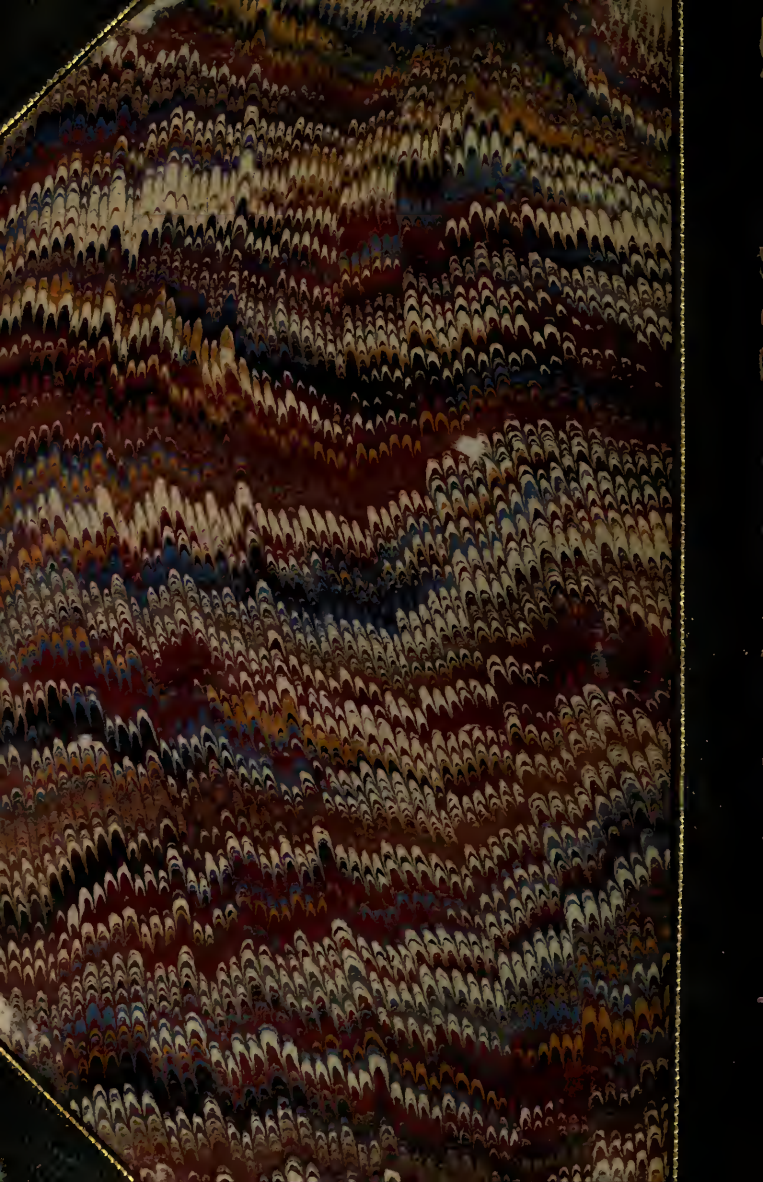
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